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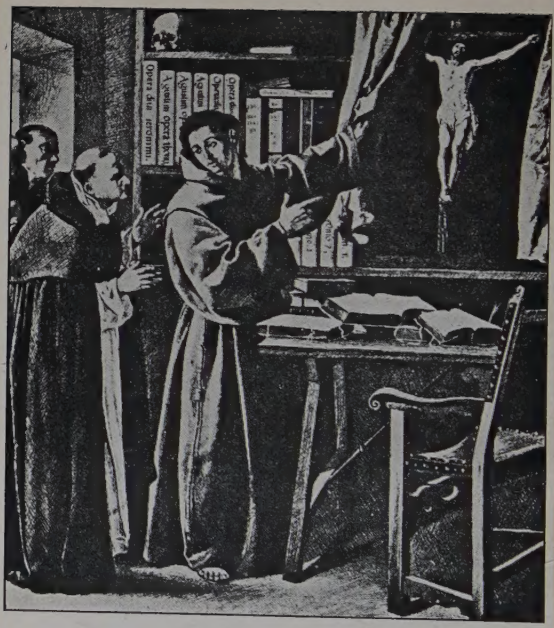
Selections from the

World's Devotional Classics

Volume III

Bonaventura to Catherine of Sienna

Vol. Three



Bonaventura

Selections from the World's Devotional Classics

EDITED BY

Robert Scott and George W. Gilmore

Editors of The Homiletic Review

IN TEN VOLUMES

Volume III

Bonaventura to Catherine of Sienna

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The Soul's Progress In God

(Itinerarium Mentis in Deum)

Translated From the Latin of

BONAVENTURA

BY

THOMAS DAVIDSON

BONAVENTURA

Seraphic Doctor, cardinal and general of the Franciscan Order; born at Bagnorea, 1221; died at Lyons, July 15, 1274. He "stands beside the great Dominican Doctor, Thomas Aquinas, whose intimate friend he was, as one of the two bright lights of medieval thought. They represent its two chief directions. Thomas is a scholastic, Bonaventura a mystic. Of the numerous works of the latter the best known and most admired are his 'Breviloquium' and his 'Itinerarium Mentis in Deum' (The Mind's Itinerary to God)."

Prolog

In the beginning (John 1:1) I invoke the First Principle, from whom, as from the Father of Lights (James 1:17), descend all illuminations, from whom is every best and every perfect gift—that is, I invoke the Eternal Father, through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that, by the intercession of the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the same God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and by that of the blessed Francis, our guide and father, he would illuminate the eyes of our soul (Luke 1:79; Phil. 4:7; John 14:27) to guide our feet into the way of that peace which passeth all sense, the peace which our Lord Jesus Christ preached and gave, of which preaching our father, Saint Francis, was the repeater, in every sermon proclaiming peace at the beginning and end; in every salutation wishing peace; in every contemplation sighing for ecstatic peace, as a citizen of that Jerusalem whereof it is said by that man of peace, who was peaceful with them who hated peace: "Seek ye those things which are for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6). For he knew that the throne of Solomon was

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only in peace, as it is written: "In Salem (peace) also is his tabernacle and his dwelling-place in Zion" (Ps. 76:3). When, therefore, according to the example of our most blessed father Francis, I panted after this peace—I, a sinner who, tho in all respects unworthy, have succeeded, the seventh in order since his transition, in the room of that most blessed father, to the general ministry of the brethren—it happened that by the divine will, in the thirty-third year after the transition of this blessed father, I, desiring to find peace of spirit, withdrew to Mount Alvernia as to a quiet place; and while I abode there and was considering in my mind certain mental ascensions to God, there occurred to me, among other things, that miracle which in the above-mentioned spot happened to the blessed Francis, namely, the vision of a winged seraph in the form of a crucifix. And, as I reflected thereupon, it immediately appeared to me that this vision typified the uplifting of our father in contemplation and the way that leads thereto; for by the six wings we may rightly understand the six upliftings of illumination, whereby, as by a kind of steps or paths, the soul is disposed to pass upward to peace through the ecstatic transports of Christian wisdom. But there is no way save through most ardent love for

the Crucified, who so transformed Paul, when caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) into Christ that he said: " I have been crucified with Christ; and I live no longer as I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). He likewise so absorbed the mind of Francis that it revealed itself in the flesh, inasmuch as he bore the most sacred stigmata of the passion in his body for two years before his death. The figure, therefore, of the six seraphic wings implies the six degrees of illumination, which, beginning with created things, lead up even to God, to whom no one rightly enters except through the Crucified. "For he that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth in by the door shall go in and out and shall find pasture" (John 10:1, 2). Wherefore John saith in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb; that they may have the authority over the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). As if he said that the heavenly Jerusalem can not be entered by contemplation except through the blood of the Lamb as a gate; for no man is in any way disposed to divine contemplations which lead to mental transports, unless with Daniel (Dan.

9:23; 10:11) he be a man of desires; for desires are kindled in us in two ways—through the cry of prayer, which maketh us roar from anguish of heart, and by the lightning of speculation, whereby the mind is turned altogether directly and intently to the rays of light. Wherefore, to the groaning of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are cleansed from the defilements of sin, I first of all invite the reader, lest he should, perchance, think that reading will suffice without unction, speculation without devotion, research without admiration, circumspection without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without charity, intelligence without humiliation, study without divine grace, the mirror without divinely inspired wisdom. To those, therefore, who are subjects of prevenient grace, the humble and pious, the contrite and devout, to those who are anointed with the oil of divine joy, to the lovers of divine wisdom, and to them who are kindled with the desire thereof, and who wish to devote themselves to magnifying, loving, and trusting God, I offer the following speculations, at the same time warning them that the mirror held up outside availeth little or nothing, unless the mirror of our minds be clean and polished. Exercise thyself, therefore, O man of God,

upon the rankling prick of conscience, before thou raisest thine eyes to the rays of divine wisdom reflected in her mirror, lest haply, from gazing at these rays, thou fall into a deeper pit of darkness.

I purpose to divide my treatise into seven chapters, prefixing to each a title for the easier understanding of the things treated therein. I beg my readers, therefore, that they will regard the intention of the writer more than his work, the meaning of his words more than his uncouth speech, truth more than elegance of style, exercise of affection more than erudition of intellect. Those who will do this must not run lightly over the course of these speculations, but must with all care ruminate upon them.

The Speculation of the Poor Man In the Wilderness

I

On the Degrees of Ascension to God, and the Beholding of Him Through His Footsteps In the Universe

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the highways to Zion. Passing through the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs" (Ps. 84:4-6). Since bliss is naught but the enjoyment of the supreme good, and the supreme good is above us, no one can become blest unless he ascend above himself, with ascension not of the body but of the heart. But we can not be lifted above ourselves, save through a higher power lifting us up. For however much our inward steps may be ordered, nothing is done unless divine aid accompany. But divine aid accompanies those who ask it from the heart, humbly and devoutly, and this is to sigh for it in this vale of tears—which is done by fervent prayer. Prayer, therefore, is the mother and source of uprising to God. Wherefore Dionysius, in his "Mystic Theology" wishing to instruct

us in the way to attain mental transports, sets down prayer as the first step. Let us each, therefore, pray and say to our Lord God: "Lead me, O Lord, in thy way, and I will walk in thy truth. Let my heart rejoice to fear thee" (Ps. 86:11). In praying this prayer, we are illuminated to know the steps of ascension to God. For, inasmuch as in our present condition this universe of things is a stair whereby we may ascend to God; and since among these things some are his footprints, some his image, some corporeal, some spiritual, some temporal, some eternal; and hence some outside of us, and some inside; in order that we may attain to the consideration of the first principle, which is altogether spiritual, eternal, and above us, we must pass through the footsteps, which are corporeal, temporal, and outside of us; and this is to be led in the way of God (John 14:6). We must also enter into our own minds, which are the image of God, eternal, spiritual, and within us; and this is to enter into the truth of God. We must also rise aloft to the eternal, which is purely spiritual and above us, by looking at the First Principle; and this is to rejoice in the knowledge of God and in reverence for his majesty. This, then, is the three-days' journey in the wilderness. This is the threefold illumina-

tion of one day; the first is as the evening, the second as the morning, and the third as noon-day. This has regard to the threefold existence of things; that is, in matter, in intelligence, and in the divine art, as it is written: "Let there be made; he made, and it was made" (Gen. 1:2, 3). This also has regard to the triple substance in Christ, who is our stair—that is, the corporeal, the spiritual, and the divine.

According to this triple progress, our minds have three principal outlooks. The first is toward corporeal things without, and with reference to this it is called animality or sensuality. The second is directed inward upon and into itself, and with reference to this it is called spirit. The third is directed upward above itself, and in reference to this it is called mind. With all these it must dispose itself to ascend to God, that it may love him with the whole mind, the whole heart, and the whole soul, in which consist at once perfect observance of the law and Christian wisdom.

But since every one of the aforesaid modes is doubled, according as we come to consider God as Alpha and as Omega, or according as we come to see God in each of the above modes through a glass and in a glass, or because each of these considerations has to be com-

mingled with the other that is joined to it, and also to be considered in its purity, so it is necessary that these three grades should rise to the number of six; whence, as God finished the universal world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the smaller world is led in the most orderly way, by six successive grades of illumination, to the rest of contemplation. Typical of this are the six steps leading to the throne of Solomon (Kings 10:19); the six-winged seraphim which Isaiah saw (Isaiah 6:2); the six days after which God called Moses from the midst of the darkness (Ex. 24:16); the six days after which, as we read in Matthew, Christ led his disciples up into a mountain and was transfigured before them (Matt. 17:1).

Corresponding, therefore, to the six grades of ascension into God are the six grades of the powers of the soul, whereby we ascend from the lowest to the highest; from the external to the most internal; from the temporal to the eternal; namely: sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, and the apex of the mind, or the spark of synteresis.[1] These grades are implanted in us by nature, deformed by sin, reformed by grace,

[1] "An appetitive faculty of the soul, receiving from God a certain natural inclination to the good; a natural stimulus to good" (Gerson).

to be purged by justice, exercised by knowledge, perfected by wisdom. For, according to the first institution of nature, man was created fit for the quiet contemplation; and, for this reason, God placed him in a paradise of delights; but, turning away from the true light to mutable good, he himself was made crooked through his own fault, and his whole race through original sin, which infected human nature in two ways—the mind with ignorance, and the flesh with concupiscence; so that man, blinded and bowed down, sits in darkness and sees not the light of heaven, unless he be aided by grace with justice against concupiscence, and by knowledge with wisdom against ignorance. All this is done through Jesus Christ, "who for us was made wisdom from God and justice and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). He, being the power and wisdom of God, the Incarnate Word full of grace and truth, made grace and truth. To wit, he infused the grace of charity, which when it comes "of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1:5), rectifies the whole soul in its threefold outlook above mentioned. He also taught the knowledge of truth, according to the three modes of theology—that is, symbolic, proper, and mystical—so that, through symbolic theology, we might rightly use sen-

sible things; through theology proper, intelligible things; and through mystical theology, might be caught up into supermental ecstasies.

Whoever, therefore, would ascend to God must avoid deforming sin and exercise the above-named natural powers, with a view to reforming grace, and this by prayer; with a view to purifying justice, and this in conversation; with a view to illuminating science, and this in meditation; with a view to perfecting wisdom, and this in contemplation. Therefore, even as no one comes to wisdom save through grace, justice, and knowledge, so no one comes to contemplation save by clear meditation, holy conversation, and devout prayer. As grace, therefore, is the foundation of rightness of will and of the clear illumination of reason, so we must first pray, then live holily, and thirdly, attend to the manifestations of truth; and, so attending, we must gradually rise, till we reach the high mountain where the God of gods is seen in Zion.

And, since we must ascend Jacob's ladder before we descend, let us place the first step in the ascent at the bottom, holding up this whole sensible world before us as a mirror, through which we may rise to God, the supreme artificer, that we may be true Hebrews,

passing forth from Egypt to the land promised to our fathers; also that we may be Christians, passing forth with Christ from this world to the Father; and that we may be lovers of wisdom, that calleth and saith: "Come unto me all ye that desire me, and be ye filled with mine offspring" (Eccles. 24:20). "For, from the greatness and beauty of created things, their Creator may be seen and known" (Wisd. of Sol. 13:5). The supreme power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Creator is reflected in all created things, as is reported in threefold fashion by the sense of the flesh to the interior sense. For the sense of the flesh lends itself to the intellect when it investigates with reason, believes with faith, or contemplates with intellect. In contemplating, it considers the actual existence of things; in believing, their habitual course; in reasoning, their potential pre-excellence.

The first point of view, which is that of contemplation, considering things in themselves, sees in them weight, number, and measure; weight, which marks the point to which they tend; number, whereby they are distinguished; measure, whereby they are limited; and hereby it sees in them mode, species, order, as well as substance, virtue, and action, from which it may rise, as from

footsteps, to understand the power, wisdom, and boundless goodness of the Creator.

The second point of view, which is that of faith, considering this world, attends to its origin, course, and termination. For by faith we believe that the ages were arranged by the word of life (Heb. 11:3); by faith we believe that the epochs of the three laws—the law of nature, the law of Scripture, and the law of grace—succeed each other and have elapsed in the most perfect order; by faith we believe that the world will be terminated by a final judgment. In the first we observe the power; in the second, the providence; in the third, the justice of the supreme principle.

The third point of view—that of reason—investigating, sees that some things are only, and some are and live only, whereas some are, live, and discern; and that the first are inferior; the second, middle; the third, superior. It sees, likewise, that some are only corporeal, and some partly corporeal, partly spiritual; whence it concludes that there are some purely spiritual, as better and worthier than either. It sees, moreover, that some are mutable and corruptible, as terrestrial things; others mutable and incorruptible, as celestial things; whence it concludes that some are immutable and incorruptible, as superceles-

tial things. From these visible things therefore it rises to consider God's power, wisdom, and goodness, as being, living, and intelligent, as purely spiritual, incorruptible, and intransmutable. This consideration, again, is extended according to the sevenfold condition of created things, which is the sevenfold witness of the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, if we consider the origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, plenitude, action, and order of all things. For the origin of things, in respect to creation, distinction, and adornment, as far as the works of the six days are concerned, proclaims the divine power, producing all things from nothing; the divine wisdom, as clearly distinguishing all things; the divine goodness, as generously adorning all things. The magnitude of things—in respect to the bulk of length, breadth, and depth; in respect to the excellence of the power extending itself in length, breadth, and depth, as is manifest in the diffusion of light; in respect to the efficacy of action, intimate, continuous, and diffused as is manifested in the action of fire—clearly indicates the immensity of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the threefold God, who exists uncircumscribed in all created things, through power, presence, and essence. The multitude of things—in respect to their diversity, general,

special, and individual, in substance, in form or figure, and in efficacy, beyond all human estimation—manifestly involves and displays the immensity of the three above-named conditions in God. The beauty of things—in respect to the variety of lights, figures, and colors, in bodies simple, mixed, and organized, as in the heavenly bodies and minerals, as in stones and metals, plants and animals—plainly proclaims the above three things. The plenitude of things—in that matter is full of forms, in respect to seminal reasons, form is full of virtue as to active power, and virtue is full of effects as to efficiency—manifestly declares this same thing. Action, manifold, according as it is natural, artificial, or moral by its most manifold variety, shows the immensity of that power, art, and goodness which indeed is to all things the cause of being, the ground of understanding, and the order of living. Order, in respect to the ratio of duration, situation, and influence—that is, to sooner or later, higher or lower, nobler or baser—in the book of creation, clearly manifests the primacy, sublimity, and divinity of the first principle in regard to infinity of power, while the order of the divine laws, precepts, and judgments in the book of Scripture manifests the immensity of his wisdom; and the order of the divine sacraments, bene-

fits, and retributions in the body of the Church manifests the immensity of his goodness, so that order itself most evidently leads us by the hand to that which is first and highest, mightiest, and wisest and best. He, therefore, who is not enlightened by all these splendors of created things is blind; he who is not waked by such callings is deaf; he who from all these effects does not praise God is dumb; he who after such intimation does not observe the first principle is foolish.

Open, therefore, thine eyes; draw near thy spiritual ears; unseal thy lips, and apply thy heart, that in all created things thou mayest see, hear, praise, love, magnify, and honor God, lest peradventure the universal frame of things should rise up against thee. Yea, for this the universe will fight against them that are without senses, whereas to them that have senses it will be a matter of glory, who can say with the prophet: "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands" (Ps. 92:4). "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches" (Ps. 104:24).

II

On the Beholding of God In His Footsteps In the Sensible World

But since, as regards the mirror of sensible things, we may contemplate God, not only through them as through footsteps, but also in them in so far as he is in them by essence, power, and presence, and this consideration is loftier than the preceding; wherefore this kind of consideration occupies the second place, as the second grade of contemplation, whereby we must be guided to the contemplation of God in all created things, which enter our minds through the bodily senses.

We must observe, therefore, that this sensible world, which is called the macrocosm—that is, the long world—enters into our soul, which is called the microcosm—that is, the little world—through the gates of the five senses, as regards the apprehension, delectation, and distinction of these sensible things; which is manifest in this way: in the sensible world some things are generant, others are generated, and others direct both these. Generant are the simple bodies, that is, the celestial bodies and the four elements. For out of the elements, through the power of light, reconciling the contrariety of elements

in things mixed, are generated and produced whatever things are generated and produced by the operation of natural power. Generated are the bodies composed of the elements, as minerals, vegetables, sensible things, and human bodies. Directing both these and those are the spiritual substances, whether altogether conjunct, like the souls of the brutes; or separably conjunct, like rational souls, or altogether separate, like the celestial spirits, which the philosophers call intelligences, we angels. On these, according to the philosophers, it devolves to move the heavenly bodies, and for this reason the administration of the universe is ascribed to them, as receiving from the First Cause—that is, God—that inflow of virtue which they pour forth again in relation to the work of government, which has reference to the natural consistence of things. But, according to the theologians, the direction of the universe is ascribed to these same beings, as regards the works of redemption, with respect to which they are called "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

Man, therefore, who is called the lesser world, has five senses, like five gates, through which the knowledge of all the things that are in the sensible world enters into his soul.

For through sight there enter the sublime and luminous bodies and all other colored things; through touch, solid and terrestrial bodies; through the three intermediate senses, the intermediate bodies; through taste, the aqueous; through hearing, the aerial; through smell, the vaporable, which have something of the humid, something of the aerial, and something of the fiery or hot, as is clear from the fumes that are liberated from spices. There enter, therefore, through these doors not only the simple bodies, but also the mixed bodies compounded of these. Seeing, then, that with sense we perceive not only these particular sensibles—light, sound, odor, savor, and the four primary qualities which touch apprehends—but also the common sensibles —number, magnitude, figure, rest, and motion; and seeing that everything which moves is moved by something else, and certain things move and rest of themselves, as do the animals in apprehending through these five senses the motions of bodies, we are guided to the knowledge of spiritual motions, as by an effect, to the knowledge of causes.

In the three classes of things, therefore, the whole of this sensible world enters the human soul through apprehension. These external sensible things are those which first enter into the soul through the gates of the five senses.

They enter, I say, not through their substances, but through their similitudes, generated first in the medium, and from the medium in the external organ, and from the external organ in the internal organ, and from this in the apprehensive power; and thus generation in the medium, and from the medium in the organ, and the direction of the apprehensive power upon it, produce the apprehension of all those things which the soul apprehends externally.

This apprehension, if it is directed to a proper object, is followed by delight. The sense delights in the object perceived through its abstract similitude, either by reason of its beauty, as in vision, or by reason of its sweetness, as in smell and hearing, or by reason of its healthfulness, as in taste and touch, properly speaking. But all delight is by reason of proportion. But since species is the ground of form, power, and action, according as it has reference to the principle from which it emanates, the medium into which it passes, or the term upon which it acts, therefore proportion is observed in three things: it is observed in similitude, inasmuch as it forms the ground of species or form, and so is called speciosity, because beauty is nothing but numerical equality, or a certain disposition of parts accompanied with sweet-

ness of color. It is observed in so far as it forms the ground of power or virtue, and thus is called sweetness, when the active virtue does not disproportionally exceed the recipient virtue, because the sense is deprest by extremes and delighted by means. It is observed in so far as it forms the ground of efficacy and impression, which is proportional when the agent, in impressing, satisfies the need of the patient, and this is to preserve and nourish it, as appears chiefly in taste and touch. And thus we see how, by pleasure, external delightful things enter through similitude into the soul, according to the threefold method of delectation.

After this apprehension and delight there comes discernment, by which we not only discern whether this thing be white or black (because this alone belongs to the outer sense), and whether this thing be wholesome or hurtful (because this belongs to the inner sense), but also discern why this delights, and give a reason therefore. And in this act we inquire into the reason of the delight which is derived by the sense from the object. This happens when we inquire into the reason of the beautiful, the sweet, and the wholesome, and discover that it is a proportion of equality. But a ratio of equality is the same in great things and in small. It is not extended

by dimensions; it does not enter into succession, or pass with passing things; it is not altered by motions. It abstracts, therefore, from place, time, and motion, and for this reason it is immutable, uncircumscribable, interminable, and altogether spiritual. Discernment, then, is an action which, by purifying and abstracting, makes the sensible species, sensibly received through the senses, enter into the intellective power. And thus the whole of this world enters into the human soul by the gates of the five senses, according to the three aforesaid activities.

All these things are footprints in which we may behold our God. For, since an apprehended species is a similitude generated in a medium and then imprest upon the organ, and through that impression leads to the knowledge of its principle—that is, of its object—it manifestly implies that that eternal light generates from itself a similitude, or splendor, coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal, and that he who is the image and similitude of the invisible God, and the splendor of the glory, and the figure of the substance which is everywhere, generates by his first generation of himself his own similitude in the form of an object in the entire medium, unites himself, by the grace of union, to the individual or rational nature, as a species

to a bodily organ, so that by this union he may lead us back to the Father as the fontal principle and object. If, therefore, all cognizable things generate species of themselves, they clearly proclaim that in them, as in mirrors, may be seen the eternal generation of the Word, the Image, and the Son, eternally emanating from God the Father.

According to this mode, the pleasing species —as species, sweet and wholesome—implies that the first speciosity, sweetness, and wholesomeness are in that first species in which are the highest proportionality and equality to the generant principle; in which is virtue gliding into the apprehension, not through phantasms, but through truth; and in which is an impression, saving, sufficient, and expelling all want on the part of the apprehender. If, then, delight is the conjunction of the suitable with the suitable, and only the similitude of God forms the ground of that which is supremely specious, sweet, and wholesome, and is united according to truth, to inwardness, and to fulness filling all capacity, we may see clearly that in God alone is fontal and true delight, and that we are let to seek this by all delights.

But, by a still more excellent and more immediate mode, discernment leads us to a surer beholding of eternal truth. For, if

discernment is conducted by reason abstracting from place, time, and mutability, and hence from dimension, succession, and transmutation, by reason immutable, uncircumscribable, and interminable—and there is nothing at all immutable, uncircumscribable, and interminable save the eternal—and all the eternal is either God or in God; if, therefore, we discern by this sort of reason whatever we discern with clearness, it is plain that he is the reason of all things, the infallible rule, and the light of truth, in which all things are reflected infallibly, indelibly, indubitably, irrefragably, indijudicably, unchangeably, unconfinably, interminably, indivisibly, and intellectually. And, therefore, those laws whereby we judge with certainty concerning all the sensible things which come under our consideration being infallible and indubitable to the intellect of the apprehender, indelible from the memory of the recollector, as being always present, irrefragable, and indijudicable to the intellect of the judger, because, as Augustine says, no one judges concerning them, but only through them, they must needs be unchangeable and incorruptible, as being necessary; unconfinable, as being uncircumscribed; interminable, as being eternal; and hence indivisible, as being intellectual and

incorporeal; not made, but increate; existing eternally in the eternal art, from which, through which, and according to which all specious or beautiful things are formed. And, therefore, they can not with certainty be judged except by that which was not only the form producing all things, but also the form preserving and distinguishing all things, inasmuch as it is being, which in all things is form, directive rule, and that whereby our minds distinguish all those things that enter them through the senses.

But this speculation is extended according to the consideration of the seven differences of the numbers by which, as by seven steps, we ascend to God, as Augustine shows in his work "On True Religion" and in the sixth book of his treatise on "Music," wherein he fixes the differences of the numbers that gradually ascend from these sensible things to the Artificer of all, so that God is seen in all things. He says that there are numbers in bodies, and especially in sounds and voices, and these he calls sonant numbers; that there are numbers abstracted from these and received into our senses, and these he calls occursors; that there are numbers proceeding from the soul into the body, as is shown in gestures and dances, and these he calls progressors; that there are numbers in the de-

lights of the senses and in the turning of the intention to the received species, and these he calls sensual numbers; that there are numbers retained in the memory, and these he calls memorial numbers; and, finally, that there are numbers by which we judge concerning all these things, and these he calls judicial numbers. These, as has been said, are necessarily above the mind, as being infallible and indijudicable. By these are imprest upon our minds the artificial numbers, which Augustine does not enumerate among those grades, because they are connected with the judicial numbers; and from these emanate the progressors, from which are created the beautiful forms of artificial things; so that there is an orderly descent from the highest, through the medial, to the lowest. To these also let us ascend from the sonant numbers, through the occursors, the sensual, and the memorial.

Since, therefore, all things are beautiful and, in a certain way, delightful, and since beauty and delight are inseparable from proportion, and proportion is primarily in numbers, all things must of necessity be full of number. For this reason, number is the chief exemplar in the mind of the artificer, and in things the chief footprint leading to wisdom. Since this is most manifest to all and most close to God, it leads us most closely and by

seven differences to God, and makes him known in all things, corporeal and sensible. And, while we apprehend numerical things, we delight in numerical proportions, and judge irrefragably by the laws of these.

From these first two steps, whereby we are guided to the beholding of God in his footprints after the manner, as it were, of the two wings descending about the (seraph's) feet, we may gather that all the created things of this sensible world lead the mind of the contemplant and wise man to the eternal God, and this for the reason that of this first principle, mightiest, wisest, best of this eternal origin, light and fulness, of this art efficient, exemplant, ordinant, they are shadows, echoes, and pictures, footprints, images, and spectacles, set before us for the beholding of God, and signs divinely given. These, I say, are, so to speak, exemplars, or rather examples, set before minds still rude and sensual, so that, through the sensible things which they see, they may be transported to intelligible things which they do not see, as through signs to the things signified. And such created things of this sensible world signify the invisible things of the invisible God, partly because God is the origin, exemplar, and end of all created things (and every effect is a sign of its cause, an example of its exemplar, and a path to the end whereunto it leads),

partly through representation proper, partly through prophetic prefiguration, partly through angelic action, and partly through superadded instruction. For every creature is by nature an effigy and similitude of that eternal wisdom; but especially so is that creature which in the book of Scripture was assumed by the spirit of prophecy for the prefiguration of spiritual things; more especially those creatures in whose effigy God was willing to appear for the angelic ministry; and most especially that creature which he was willing to set forth as a sign, and which plays the part not only of a sign, as that word is commonly used, but also of a sacrament. From all this we gather that "the invisible things of God, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made (Rom. 1:20), so that those who will not observe these things and recognize, bless, and love God in all these things, are without excuse, since they will not be transported from darkness to the wondrous light of God" (Rom. 1:21). But, thanks be to God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has transported us from darkness into his wondrous light, inasmuch as we are disposed, by these lights given from without, to re-enter the mirror of our minds, in which the divine things are reflected.

III

On the Beholding of God Through His Image Imprest Upon the Natural Powers

But, since the two grades above described, leading us to God by his footprints, whereby he is reflected in all created things, have guided us to the point where we entered into ourselves—that is, into our minds, in which the divine image is reflected—we must now, in the third place, enter into ourselves, and leaving, as it were, the fore-court outside, endeavor, through a mirror, to see God in the holy place that is, in the forepart of the Tabernacle—wherein, as from a candlestick, the light of truth is reflected on the faces of our minds in which, indeed, is resplendent the image of the blessed Trinity.

Enter, therefore, into thyself and see that thy mind loves itself most fervently, and could not love itself if it did not know itself, or know itself if it did not remember itself, since we seize nothing through intelligence that is not present in our memory. And hereby thou perceivest, not with the eye of flesh but with the eye of reason, that thy soul has a threefold power. Consider, therefore, the operations and habits of these three

powers, and thou wilt be able to see God through thyself, as through a likeness, and this is seeing him through a glass and in a riddle (1 Cor. 13:12).

But the operation of memory is retention and re-presentation, not only of things present, corporeal, and temporal, but also of things successive, simple, and sempiternal. For the memory retains past things through recollection, present things through susception, future things through foresight. It retains also simple things; for example, the principles of continuous and discreet quantities, as point, instant, unity, without which it is impossible to remember or to think the things which have these for their principles. No less does it retain, as sempiternal and sempiternally, the principles and dignities of the sciences, because it can never so forget them, while it uses reason, that it will not accept them and assent to them as soon as it hears them, and this not as if it perceived them afresh, but as recognizing them to be innate in itself and familiar. This becomes clear as soon as we propose to any one a choice between affirmation and negation with regard to anything, whether "every whole is greater than its part," or whatever other dignity, being above contradiction, is admitted by reason. From the first actual reten-

tion, therefore, of temporal things—that is, of things past, present, and future—it receives an image of eternity, whose indivisible present extends to all times. From the second it appears that it must not only be informed from without, through phantasms, but also from above, by taking up and having in itself simple forms which can not enter through the gates of the senses and the phantasms of sensible things. From the third we learn that it has present in it an unchangeable light, in which it remembers the unvarying truths. And thus, through the operations of the memory, it appears that the mind itself is an image of God, and a similitude so present to him, and having him so present to it that it actually grasps him, is potentially capable of holding him, and may become a partaker in him.

Again, the operation of the intellective power consists in the perception of the meaning of terms, propositions, and inferences. But the intellect seizes the meanings of terms when it comprehends, by definition, what any particular thing is. But a definition can be made only through higher notions, and these have to be defined by still higher ones, until we arrive at the highest and most general, without a knowledge of which the lower ones can not be definitely understood. Unless,

therefore, we know what being-in-itself is, we can not know the definition of any special substance. But being-in-itself can not be known unless it is known along with its conditions, which are unity, truth, and goodness. But, since being can be thought as diminished and as complete, as imperfect and as perfect, as potential and as actual, as relative and as absolute, as partial and as total, as transient and as permanent, as through another and as through itself, as mixed with non-being and as pure, as dependent and as absolute, as posterior and as prior, as mutable and as immutable, as simple and as compound—since the privations and defects can in no degree be known save through the positives, our intellect, as being purely analytical, does not attain an understanding of any created entity, unless it be aided by the understanding of that being which is altogether pure, altogether actual, altogether complete and absolute, which is simply and eternally being, in which are the grounds of all things in their purity. How, indeed, should our intellect know that this being is a defective and incomplete being, if it had no knowledge of that being which is without all defect? And so on of the other conditions above specified. But our intellect is then said to comprehend truly the meaning of propositions when

it knows with certainty that they are true; and to know this is to know, since it can not be deceived in that comprehension; for it knows that that truth can not be otherwise. It knows, therefore, that this truth is unchangeable. But since our minds are changeable, they can not see that truth unchangeably reflected except by some other light which radiates altogether unchangeably, and this can not possibly be a mutable, created thing. It knows, therefore, in that light which lighteth every man as he cometh into the world (John 1:9). This is the true light which in the beginning was with God (John 1:1). Our intellect, then, truly perceives the meaning of an inference when it sees that the conclusion necessarily follows from the premises. This it sees not only in necessary, but also in contingent terms; as, for example, in this: if a man runs, a man moves. Again, he perceives this necessary habit not only in things that are, but also in things that are not. For example, the affirmation: if a man runs, a man moves, is equally true whether a man exist or do not exist. Hence the necessity of this sort of inference does not come from the existence of the thing in matter, because that is contingent; nor from the existence of the thing in the soul, because then it would be a fiction if it were not in

the thing. It comes, therefore, from the exemplarity in the eternal art, according to which things have mutually an aptitude and habit for the representation of that eternal art. Hence, as Augustine says in his treatise on "The True Religion," the light of every man who reasons truly is lit by that truth, and endeavors to arrive at that truth; from which it is obvious that our intellect is joined to the eternal truth itself, inasmuch as it can grasp no truth with certainty except through its teaching. Thou mayest, therefore, of thyself see the truth which teaches thee, if appetites and phantasms do not prevent thee and interpose themselves, as clouds, between thee and the ray of the truth.

The action of the power of choice is observed in counsel, judgment, desire. Counsel consists in inquiring which is better—this or that. By "better" we mean approaching more closely to the best. But approach implies greater assimilation. No one, therefore, knows whether this is better than that, unless he knows that it more closely resembles the best. And no one knows that one thing more closely resembles another, unless he knows that other. For I do not know that this man resembles Peter, unless I know or am acquainted with Peter. Every one, there-

fore, who takes counsel is imprest with the knowledge of the highest good. But any certain judgment with respect to things about which counsel can be taken must follow some law. And no one judges with certainty according to a law, unless he is certain that that law is right and that he must not judge it. But our minds judge with regard to themselves. Since, then, they may not judge the law according to which they judge, that law is superior to our minds, and by this they judge according as it has been imprest upon them. And nothing is superior to the human mind save him alone who made it. Therefore, in judging, our deliberative power ascends to the divine laws, if it analyze with complete analysis. Desire, again, is chiefly directed to that which most deeply moves it. But that moves it most deeply which is most deeply loved; and that which is most deeply loved is happiness. Again happiness is not possest except through the highest and ultimate end. But human desire craves nothing save the highest good, or what is co-ordinated with it, or what has some resemblance to it. Such is the power of the highest good that nothing can be loved by the creature save through the desire of that good. The creature is deceived and errs, when it accepts the semblance and image for the truth.

Behold, therefore, how near the soul is to God, and how memory leads to eternity, intelligence to truth, and power of choice to the highest goodness, according to their operations. Again, according to the order, origin, and habit of these powers, it leads up to the blessed Trinity itself; for from memory rises intelligence, as its offspring; because then we understand, when a similitude which is in the memory results in clearness of intellect, which is nothing else than the Word. From memory and intelligence is breathed forth love, as the bond between the two. These three—the generant mind, the word, and love—are in the soul as memory, intelligence, and love, which are consubstantial, coequal, and coeval, reciprocally passing in each other. If, therefore, God is perfect spirit, he has memory, intelligence, and will; he has the begotten Word and the breathed Love. These are necessarily distinguished, since the one is produced by the other, not essentially, not accidentally; therefore, personally. When, therefore, the mind considers itself, it rises through itself, as through a mirror, to behold the blessed Trinity of Father, Word, and Love—three persons coeternal, coequal, and consubstantial—so that each of the three is in each of the other two, whereas one is not the other, but these three are one God.

To this beholding of its own principle, three and one, through the trinity of its own powers, whereby it is the image of God, the soul is aided by the lights of the sciences, which perfect and inform it, and in three ways represent the most blessed Trinity; for all philosophy is either natural, or rational, or moral. The first treats of the cause of being, and therefore leads to the power of the Father; the second, of the ground of understanding, and therefore leads to the wisdom of the Word; the third, of the order of living, and therefore leads to the goodness of the Holy Spirit. Again, the first is divided into metaphysics, mathematics, and physics. Of these, the first treats of the essence of things, the second of their numbers and figures, the third of their natures, powers, and diffusive actions. Hence, the first leads to the first principle, the Father; the second to his Image, the Son; the third to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The second is divided into grammar which imparts power of expression; logic, which imparts perspicacity in argument; rhetoric, which imparts skill in persuading or moving; and these, in like manner involve the mystery of the most blessed Trinity. The third is divided into monastics, economics, and politics. The first of these involves the innascibility of the First Principle; the sec-

ond, the familiarity of the Son; the third, the liberality of the Holy Spirit. But all these sciences have fixt and infallible rules, as lights and rays descending from the eternal law into our minds. And thus our minds, being irradiated and superfused with so many splendors, may, if they be not blind, be led through themselves to the contemplation of that eternal light. And the irradiation and consideration of this light lifts up the wise into admiration, whereas it leads the foolish, who do not believe that they may understand, into confusion, so that the saying of the prophet is fulfilled: "Thou shinest wondrously from the eternal hills: all the foolish were confounded in their hearts" (Ps. 76:5, 6).

IV

On the Beholding of God In His Image, as Reformed By Gifts of Grace

But since, not only by passing through ourselves, but also within ourselves, we may behold the First Principle, and this vision is superior to the preceding, this mode of consideration occupies the fourth grade of contemplation. Strange it seems, when it has been shown that God is so near to our minds that so few are able to behold the First Prin-

ciple in themselves. But the reason is not far to seek. The human mind, distracted by cares, does not enter into itself through memory; beclouded with phantasms, it does not return to itself through intelligence; allured by appetites, it does not revert to itself through desire for internal sweetness and spiritual joy. Wherefore, being totally prostrate among these sensible things, it can not enter in into itself, as into the image of God.

And since a man must lie in the spot where he falls unless some one sets to work and helps him to rise, our souls could not be perfectly raised from these sensible things to the intuition of itself, and of eternal truth in itself, had not truth, taking on human form in Christ, become a stair for it, repairing the former stair which in Adam had been broken down. Hence, however far a man may be illuminated by the light of nature and acquired science, he can not enter into himself to enjoy himself in the Lord, save through the mediation of Christ, who says: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and shall find pasture" (John 10:9). But we do not approach this door unless we believe in him, hope for him, love him. If, therefore, we wish to re-enter to the fruition of truth, as into paradise, we must go in through faith,

hope, and love toward the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who is, as it were, the tree of life in the midst of paradise.

The image of our mind, therefore, must be clothed with the three theological virtues whereby the soul is purified, illuminated, and perfected, and thus the image is reformed, repaired, and made suitable for the heavenly Jerusalem, and a part of the Church militant, which, according to the apostle, is the offspring of the heavenly Jerusalem. For he says: "The Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother" (Gal. 4:26). The soul, therefore, that believes in, hopes for, and loves Jesus Christ who is the Word of the Father, incarnate, uncreated, inspired—that is, the Way, the Truth, and the Life—does three things. In believing through faith in Christ as the uncreated Word, which is the word and glory of the Father, it recovers spiritual hearing and sight—hearing to receive the sayings of Christ, sight to behold the glories of his light. In longing with hope to receive the inspired Word, through desire and affection it recovers its spiritual scent. In embracing with love the incarnate Word, as deriving delight from it, and in passing over into it through ecstatic love, it recovers spiritual taste and touch. Having recovered these senses, and seeing, hearing, smelling,

tasting, and embracing its Spouse, it is able to sing, like a bride, the Song of Songs, which was composed for the exercise of contemplation in this fourth grade, which no one comprehends save him who receives it, because it consists rather of affectional experience than of rational reflection. For in this grade, having recovered its interior senses, so as to see that which is supremely beautiful, to hear that which is supremely harmonious, to smell that which is supremely odoriferous, to taste that which is supremely sweet, to apprehend that which is supremely delightful, the mind is disposed to mental ecstasies—that is, through devotion, admiration, and exultation, according to the three exclamations uttered in the Song of Songs (Song of Songs, 3:6). Of these, the first is uttered through superabundance of devotion, whereby the soul becomes like a rod of smoke from the perfumes of myrrh and frankincense. The second is uttered through excellence of admiration, whereby the soul becomes as the dawn, the moon, and the sun, according to that process of illuminations, which lift up the soul to consider and admire its Spouse (*Ibid* 6:9). The third takes place through superabundance of exultation, whereby the soul becomes rich in the joys of the sweetest delight, resting wholly upon its beloved (*Ibid* 8:3). Hav-

ing acquired these things (Sum. Theol. I, q. 108, art. 1), our spirits become hierarchic to ascend aloft, through conformity to that supernal Jerusalem into which none enters, unless it first descend into his heart through grace, as John saw in his Apocalypse (Rev. 21:27). But it descends into the heart when, through reformation of the image, through the theologic virtues, and through delights of the spiritual senses and upliftings of ecstasies, our spirits become hierarchic—that is, purged, illuminated, and perfected. Thus, likewise, it is marked by the grades of the nine orders, inasmuch as within it are disposed, in due order, annunciation, dictation, guidance, ordination, invigoration, command, acceptance, revelation, unification, which in their grades correspond to the nine orders of the angels, so that the grades of the three first named have regard to the nature of the human soul; the three following grades, to its industry; the last three to grace. Possessing these, the soul, when it enters into itself, enters the supernal Jerusalem, where, considering the orders of the angels, it sees in them God, who, dwelling in them, performs all their actions. Whence Bernard says to Eugenius that God in the seraphim loves as charity; in the cherubim knows as truth; in the thrones sits as equity; in the dominions

rules as majesty; in the principalities guides as principle; in the powers preserves as health; in the virtues acts as virtue; in the archangels reveals as light; in the angels assists as piety (*De Consideratione*, book 5, chap. 5). From all these God is seen as all in all, through contemplation of him in those minds in which he dwells through gifts of the most abounding charity.

For this grade of speculation the special and principal aid is the consideration of Holy Scripture divinely inspired, just as philosophy was the chief aid for the preceding grade; for Holy Scripture deals chiefly with works of reparation; whence it treats mainly of faith, hope, and charity, and most especially of charity. Of this the apostle says: "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1:5). It is the fulfilment of the law (Rom. 13:10), as he likewise says. And our Savior himself asserts that all the law and the prophets hang upon his two precepts—that is, on love to God and our neighbor. These two are implied in the one Spouse of the Church, Jesus Christ, who is at once our neighbor and God; at once our Brother and Lord; at once the Word increate and incarnate, our Former and Reformer, Alpha and Omega. He is also the supreme Hierarch,

purging, illuminating, and perfecting his Spouse—that is, the whole Church and every holy soul. Wherefore, of this hierarch and this ecclesiastical hierarchy the whole Scripture treats, by which we are taught to purge, illuminate, and perfect ourselves; and this according to the threefold law laid down in it, the natural law, the written law, and the law of grace; or, rather, according to its threefold principle part—*viz.*, the Mosaic law, purging; the prophetic revelation, illuminating; and the gospel teaching, perfecting; or, still rather, according to its triple spiritual meaning, the tropologic, which purges to honesty of life; the allegorical, which illuminates to clearness of understanding; the anagogic, which perfects through mental ecstasies and the sweetest participations in wisdom; according to the three theological virtues above named, the spiritual senses as reformed, the three ecstasies above mentioned, and the hierarchical acts of the mind, whereby our minds revert to interior things, in them to behold God in the glories of the saints, and on them to sleep and rest in peace, as on couches, their Spouse adjuring them not to stir, until they please (Song of Songs 2:7).

From these two middle steps, over which we pass to the contemplation of God within us, as in mirrors of created images, and, as it

were, after the manner of wings outstretched for flight—wings holding the middle place—we may understand that we are led to divine things through the natural powers of the rational soul, in accordance with their operations, habitudes, and scientific habits, as appears from the third grade. We are led, in the same manner, through the hierarchic acts of human minds—*viz.*, purgation, illumination, and perfection; by the hierarchic revelations of the Holy Scriptures, given to us through the angels, according to the saying of the apostle, that "the law was ordained through angels by the hand of a Mediator" (Gal. 3:19); and, finally, we are led through the hierarchies and hierarchic orders, which in our minds have to be disposed after the manner of the heavenly Jerusalem. Our minds, filled full with all these lights, are inhabited by the divine wisdom, like houses of God, being made daughters, spouses, and friends of God, members, sisters, and co-heirs of Christ the head, and, likewise, temples of the Holy Spirit, founded by faith, reared by hope, and dedicated to God by sanctity of mind and body. All this is accomplished by the perfectly sincere love of Christ "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given to us" (Rom. 5:5), and without which we can not know the secret

things of God. For, as no one can know the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11). Let us, therefore, be rooted and grounded in love, that we may be strong to apprehend, with all the saints, what is the length of eternity, the breadth of liberality, the height of majesty, and the depth of judging wisdom (Eph. 3:17, 18).

V

On the Beholding of the Divine Unity, Through Its Primary Name, Which Is Being

But, inasmuch as we may contemplate God, not only without us and within us, but also above us—without us by his footsteps, within us by his image, and above us by the light which is imprest upon our minds (which is the light of eternal truth, since these minds of ours are formed directly by the truth itself)—those who are exercised in the first have entered the court in front of the Tabernacle (Ex. 27:9); those who are exercised in the second have entered the holy place; while those who are exercised in the third enter with the high priest into the holy of

holies, where above the ark are the cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy-seat (Ex. 25:8-20). These we understand to mean two modes or grades of contemplating the invisible and eternal things of God. One of these relates to the essential attributes of God; the other to the special attributes of the (three) persons. The first mode first and chiefly fixes our vision upon being itself, telling us that that which is is the first name of God. The second mode fixes our vision upon the Good itself, telling us that this is the first name of God. The first looks specially toward the Old Testament, which chiefly proclaims the unity of the divine essence; whence it was said to Moses: "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14). The second looks to the New Testament, which determines the plurality of the divine persons, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, our Master, Christ, wishing to lift up to the perfection of the gospel the young man who had observed the law, ascribed to God chiefly and alone the attribute of goodness. He says: "None is good save one, even God" (Mark 10:18). Damascenus, therefore, following Moses, says that "He-who-is" is the first name of God; Dionysius, following Christ, says that "The Good" is the first name of God.

Let him, therefore, who desires to contemplate the invisible things of God, as regards unity of essence, first fix his eyes upon being itself, and see that it is so absolutely certain in itself that it can not be thought not to be; because, being absolutely pure, it presents itself in the complete absence of non-being, just as naught presents itself in the complete absence of being. Even, therefore, as pure naught contains naught of being or of its conditions, so, on the contrary, being contains naught of non-being, either actually or potentially, either according to the real truth or to our estimate. But since non-being is a privation of being, it enters our intelligence only through being. Being, on the other hand, does not enter our intelligence through anything but itself, because everything that is understood is understood either as non-being, or as being potentially, or as being actually. If, therefore, non-being can be understood only through being, and potential being only through actual being, and being designates the pure act of that which is, it follows that being is what first enters the intellect, and this being it is that is pure act. But this is not particular being which is limited being, because it is mixed with potentiality; nor is it analogous being, because this has least of actuality, being that

which in the smallest degree is. It remains, therefore, that this being is the Divine Being.

Strange, therefore, is the blindness of the intellect, which does not consider that which it first sees, and without which it can know nothing. But as the eye, when intent upon various differences of colors, does not see the light whereby it sees all other things, and if it does see it, does not notice it, so the eye of our mind, being intent upon these particular and universal things, does not notice that being which is outside all genus, altho it first occurs to the mind, and all things are known through it. Hence, it most truly appears that as the eye of the bat is related to light, so the eye of our mind is related to the most manifest things of nature. The reason is that, being accustomed to the darkness of beings and the phantasm of sensible things, when it sees the light of the highest being, it seems to see nothing (not understanding that this darkness is the highest illumination of our minds), just as when the eye sees pure light, it seems to see nothing.

Behold, therefore, this absolutely pure being, if thou canst, and it will be plain to thee that it can not be derived from aught else; and it is necessarily thought as in every respect first, because it can neither be from nothing nor from anything else. For what

is through itself, if being be not through itself and from itself? It will present itself to thee as altogether free from non-being, and, hence, as never beginning, never ending, and therefore as eternal. It will likewise present itself to thee as in no way containing anything but being itself, and, hence, as not compounded with anything, but perfectly simple. It will further present itself as containing naught of possibility, because every possible in some way contains somewhat of non-being; hence, it will appear as supremely and completely actual. It will present itself as containing no defectibility, and, hence, as absolutely perfect. Finally, it will present itself as having no adversity, and hence as supremely one.

The being, therefore, which is pure being, being simply, and being absolute is being primary, eternal, superlatively simple, actual, perfect, and one. And these things are so certain that the opposite of them can not be thought by him who understands being. From one of them, likewise, the rest may be inferred. For, since being is being simple, it is simply first; because it is simply first, it is not made by aught else, nor could it be made by itself; therefore, it is eternal. In like manner, since it is first and eternal, it is not composed of other things; therefore

it is perfectly simple. Again, since it is first, eternal, and perfectly simple, it contains no possibility intermingled with its actuality; therefore it is perfectly actual. Since it is first, eternal, perfectly simple, and perfectly actual, therefore it is altogether perfect; such a thing neither lacks aught nor can aught be added to it. Since it is first, eternal, perfectly simple, perfectly actual, and altogether perfect, therefore it is in the highest degree one; for that which is called omnifarious superabundance is so called with respect to all things. Also, that which is called superabundance simply can not possibly belong save to one being. Hence, if God is the name for being, primary, eternal, altogether simple, altogether actual, altogether perfect, it is impossible that he should be thought not to be, or not to be one and no more. "Hear, therefore, O Israel! the Lord our God is one God" (Deut. 6:4). If thou beholdest this in pure simplicity of mind, thou art in some sort suffused with the illumination of the eternal light. But thou hast wherewithal to be uplifted into admiration, for being is first and last; it is eternal and altogether present; it is more simple and greatest; it is altogether actual and altogether immutable; it is altogether perfect and infinite; it is in the highest degree one, and yet in all modes. If thou admirest these things with a pure

mind, thou art suffused with a greater light, because thou seest, further, that it is last because it is first. For, because it is first, it performs all things by reason of itself, whence it must be the ultimate end, the beginning and consummation, Alpha and Omega. It is most excellent, because it is eternal. For, because it is eternal, it is not limited by another; it does not fail from itself; it does not pass from one thing to another. Therefore, it has neither past nor future, but is solely present. It is greatest, because it is altogether simple. Because it is altogether simple in essence, it is greatest in virtue; inasmuch as virtue is the more nearly infinite the more it is united. It is altogether immutable, because it is altogether actual. For, because it is altogether actual, it is pure act, and because it is such, it acquires nothing new and loses nothing which it has; hence it can not be changed. It is infinite, because it is altogether perfect. For, because it is altogether perfect, nothing better, nobler, or worthier than it can be thought; hence, nothing greater. And every such thing is infinite. It is in all modes, because it is in the highest degree one. For, because it is in the highest degree one, it is the universal principle of all multiplicity and, for the same reason, it is the universal cause of all

things—efficient, formal, and final—as likewise the cause of being, the ground of understanding, the order of living. It is, therefore, in all modes, not as the essence of all things but as the altogether superexcellent, altogether universal, and altogether sufficient cause of all essences. Its virtue, because in the highest degree united in essence, is in the highest degree infinite and manifold in efficacy.

Turning back, let us say: Because being altogether pure and absolute—that is, being simple—is first and last, it is the origin and consummating end of all things. Because it is eternal and altogether present, it includes and pervades all durations, as if it were at once their center and circumference. Because it is altogether simple and greatest, it is wholly within everything and wholly without everything; hence it is an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. Because it is altogether actual and immutable, while remaining motionless, it imparts motion to the universe. Because it is altogether perfect and infinite, it is within everything without being included; it is outside of everything without being excluded; it is above everything without being lifted up; it is below everything without being cast down. But because it is

in the highest degree one and in all modes, it is all things in all things, albeit all things are many, and it is but one. And it is so because (through its perfectly simple unity, its perfectly serene truth, and its perfectly sincere goodness) there is in it all virtuosity, all exemplarity, and all communicability; whence all things are of it, through it, and unto it (Rom. 11:36). And this is true because it is omnipotent, omniscient, and in all modes, to behold which perfectly is to be blest; as it was said to Moses: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee" (Ex. 33:19).

VI

On the Beholding of the Most Blessed Trinity In Its Name Which Is Good

After the consideration of essentials, the eye of the intelligence must be raised to the contemplation of the most blessed Trinity, so that the second cherub may be set up beside the first. For, as being is the principle of the vision of essentials and the name whereby other things are known, so the good is the chief foundation for the contemplation of emanations. Behold, therefore, and observe how the best—which simply is, than which nothing better can be thought, and which is such that

it can not be thought not to be, because to be is altogether better than not to be—is in such a way that it can not be rightly thought unless it be thought as three and one; for by the good is meant that which is self-diffusive. Therefore the supreme good is supremely self-diffusive. But the highest diffusion can not be unless it be actual and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, indeficient and perfect. Unless, therefore, there were eternally in the highest good an actual, consubstantial, and hypostatic production, as noble as that which produces, in the form of generation and spiration, so as to produce an eternal principle eternally acting as coprinciple, and which shall be beloved and beloved in company, that is, begotten and breathed forth—that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—it would in no way be the highest good, because it would not be in the highest degree diffused; for temporal diffusion in created things is only as a center or point in comparison with the infinity of eternal goodness. Hence no diffusion can be thought greater than this, in which the diffuser communicates to another his whole substance and nature. It would not be the highest good, if it could lack reality or intellect. If, therefore, with thy mind's eye thou canst behold the purity

of goodness—which is the pure act of a principle in charity loving with a love that is gratuitous, due, and compounded of grace and duty; which is the most complete diffusion, in the manner of nature and of will; which is a diffusion after the manner of the Word, in which all things are said, and after the manner of a gift, in which all other gifts are given—thou mayest see, through the supreme communicability of the good, that the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is necessary. In these, by reason of their supreme goodness, there must be the highest communicability and through the highest communicability the highest consubstantiality, and through the highest consubstantiality the highest configurality, and through these the highest coequality, and through this the highest coeternity, and through all the aforesaid the highest cointimity, whereby one is necessarily in the other through the highest circumincession, and one acts along with the other through the omnifarious indivision of the substance, the virtue, and the action of the most blessed Trinity.

But, when thou contemplatest these things, see thou think not that thou comprehendest the incomprehensible; for thou must needs still reflect upon these six conditions, and this brings the eyes of our minds mightily into

the amazement of admiration. For here is the highest communicability, along with distinction of persons, the highest consubstantiality, along with plurality of hypostases; the highest configurality, along with discrete personality; the highest coequality, along with order; the highest coeternity, along with emanation; the highest cointimity, along with emission. Who, at sight of these wondrous things, does not rise up into admiration? But all these things we most clearly understand to be in the blessed Trinity, if we lift up our eyes to the altogether superexcellent goodness; for, if there are here the highest communication and true diffusion, there are here true origin and true distinction. And, since the whole is communicated, and not the part, that same which is kept is given, and given entire. Therefore the emanating and the producing are both distinguished by properties and are essentially one. Since, therefore, they are distinguished by properties, they have properties of persons, plurality of hypostases, emanation of origin, order not of posteriority but of origin and emission, not of local change but of gratuitous inspiration, by reason of the authority of the producer—an authority which the sender exercises over the sent. But, since they are one substantially, they must have unity in essence, form, dignity, eternity,

existence, and circumscribability. When, therefore, thou considerest these things one by one, thou hast wherewithal to contemplate the truth. When thou comparest them mutually with each other, thou hast wherewithal to arise to the highest admiration. And, therefore, that thy mind may arise through admiration to admirable contemplation, these things must be considered together; for this is indicated by the cherubim, which looked at each other (Ex. 25:20). Nor is it a thing without mystery that they looked at each other with their faces turned toward the mercy-seat, that it may be fulfilled, which is spoken by the Lord in John: "This is eternal life, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (chap. 17:3). For we must admire God's essential and personal conditions not only in themselves, but also in comparison with the superadmirable union of God and the man in the person of Christ.

For, if thou art the one cherub, contemplating the essential things of God, and wonderest because the Divine Being is at once first and last, eternal and most present, most simple and greatest or uncircumscribed, wholly everywhere and comprehended nowhere, most actual and never moved, most perfect, without excess or defect and yet im-

measurable and infinite without bound, supremely one and yet omnifarious, as containing all things, as being all power, all truth, all good—look at the mercy-seat and behold with wonder that therein the first principle is joined to the last term—God with man formed on the sixth day—the Eternal joined to temporal man, born of a virgin in the fulness of time; the most simple with the most composite; the most actual with the most passive and dead; the most perfect and infinite with the modified; the absolutely one and omnifarious with the individual composite and distinct from all others, with man, with Jesus Christ.

If thou art the other cherub, contemplating the special attributes of the (three) persons, and wonderest that communicability coexists with property; consubstantiality with plurality; configurality with personality; coequality with order; eternity with production; cointimity with emission (for the Son is sent (forth) by the Father and the Holy Spirit by both, while, nevertheless, he is always with them and never departs from them), look at the mercy-seat and behold with wonder how in Christ personal unity coexists with trinity of substances and duality of natures; omnifarious agreement with plurality of wills· compredication of God and man with

plurality of properties; coadoration with plurality of nobilities; coexaltation above all things with plurality of dignities; condomination with plurality of powers. But in this consideration is the perfection of mental illumination; the mind, as on the sixth day, sees man made in the image of God. For, if image is expressive similitude, when our mind contemplates in Christ, the Son of God (who is by nature the invisible Image of God) our humanity so wonderfully exalted, so ineffably united, seeing at once in one the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, Alpha and Omega, the cause and the caused, the Creator and the creature—in a word, the book written within and without—it has already arrived at a certain perfect thing, arriving with God at the perfection of its illuminations, in the sixth grade, on the sixth day. And nothing more remains but the day of rest, on which, through mental ecstasy, the perspicacity of the human mind may rest from all the works which it has performed.

VII

On Mental and Mystic Ecstasy, Wherein Rest Is Given to the Intellect, the Affection Passing Wholly Over, Through Ecstasy, Into God

After our mind has passed through these six considerations, which are like the six steps to the throne of the true Solomon (1 Kings 10:19), whereby there is an ascent to peace, wherein the true man of peace rests in a peaceful mind, as in an inner Jerusalem; like the six wings of the cherub, by which the mind of the true man of contemplation, full of the enlightenment of supernal wisdom, may be able to rise aloft; like the first six days, in which the mind is exercised, that finally it may attain to the sabbath of rest—after our mind has beheld God outside of itself by his footsteps and in his footsteps; within itself through his image and in his image; above itself by the similitude of the divine light reflected above us, and in that light as far as is possible according to the stage of progress and the exercise of our mind, when at last, on the sixth day, it shall have reached such a point as to behold in the first and highest prin-

ciple and in Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, those things the like of which can in no degree be found in created things, and which go beyond all perspicacity of the human intellect, it remains that, beholding these things, it shall transcend and pass beyond, not only this sensible world, but also itself; in which transition Christ is the Way and the Door, Christ is the Stair and the Vehicle, as the mercy-seat placed above the ark of God, and the sacrament hidden from before the ages. He who looks at this mercy-seat, gazing with his face fully turned at him who hangs on the cross, through faith, hope, and charity, through devotion, admiration, praise, and jubilation, makes the passover, that is, the transition, with him so that through the rod of the cross he passes over the Red Sea from Egypt into the desert, where he tastes the hidden manna (Rev. 2: 17), and rests with Christ in the tomb, being, as it were, outwardly dead, nevertheless feeling, as far as possible in the condition of pilgrimage, what was said on the cross to the robber who clung to Christ: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23: 43). This also was shown to the blessed Francis when, in the ecstasy of contemplation on the lofty mountain (where I thought out these things which are written), there appeared to

him a six-winged seraph fastened to a cross, as I and many others heard from a companion of his who was with him at the time when he passed over into God through ecstasy of contemplation, and was set forth as an example of perfect contemplation, as formerly he had been of perfect action, like a second Jacob changed into Israel (Gen. 35:10), that through him God might invite all truly spiritual men to this kind of trance and mental ecstasy, more by example than by word. But in this transition, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual operations must be left behind and the whole apex of affection transferred and transformed into God. But this is a mystical and most secret thing, which no one knows save him who receives it; and no one receives it save him who desires it; and no one desires it save him whom the fire of the Holy Spirit, sent upon earth by Christ, inflames to the very marrow; and therefore the apostle says that this mystical wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). Since, therefore, in this, nature can do nothing and industry but little, little heed must be paid to inquiry and much to unction; little to language and very much to internal joy; little to words and writing and the whole to the gift of God—that is, to the Holy Spirit; little to created things and all to the creative

essence, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while we say with Dionysius to God the Trinity: "Superessential Trinity and Over-God, better than best overseer of Christian theosophy, direct us to the more than unknown, the superlucent and supersublime apex of mystical utterances, where the new and absolute and inconvertible and unchangeable mysteries of theology are hid in the superlucent darkness of occult teaching, science, which is supersplendent in the perfect, supermanifest gloom, in which all things are reflected, and which overfills the invisible intellects with the splendors of the invisible overblest." So much to God. But to the friend to whom these things are written let us say with the same: Do thou, O friend, proceeding boldly on the way to mystic visions, abandon the senses and the operations of the intellect; abandon things sensible and things invisible, and all non-being and being; and, as far as possible, unknowingly restore thyself to the unity of him who is above all essence and all science. For in rising, by an immeasurable and absolute ecstasy of pure mind, above thyself and all things, thou shalt ascend, abandoning all things and freed from all things, to the superessential ray of divine darkness. But if thou wouldst know how these things are done, ask grace not learning; desire not intellect:

the groaning of prayer not the diligence of reading; the spouse not the master; God not man; darkness not clearness; not light, but fire totally inflaming and transporting into God by excessive unctions and most ardent affections. This fire, indeed, is God, and his way is toward Jerusalem, and it was kindled by the man Christ, in the fervor of his most ardent passion—a fervor of which he alone truly partakes who says: "My soul hath chosen strangling and my bones death" (Job 8:15). He who chooseth this death may see God, because it is true beyond doubt: "Man shall not see me and live" (Ex. 33:22). Let us die, therefore, and enter into darkness. Let us impose silence on our anxieties, our appetites, and our imaginings. Let us pass with Christ crucified from this world to the Father, that when the Father is shown to us we may say with Philip: "It sufficeth us" (John 14:8). Let us hear with Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9). Let us exult with David, saying: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:26). "Blessed be the Lord for evermore; and let all the people say: Amen and Amen" (Ps. 89:52).

A Prayer of the Earl of Shaftesbury

O God, the Father of the forsaken, the Help of the weak, the Supplier of the needy, who hast diffused and proportioned thy gifts to body and soul, in such sort that all may acknowledge and perform the joyous duty of mutual service; who teachest us that love toward the race of man is the bond of perfectness, and the imitation of thy blessed self; open our eyes and touch our hearts, that we may see and do, both for this world and for that which is to come, the things which belong unto our peace. Strengthen me in the work I have undertaken; give me counsel and wisdom, perseverance, faith and zeal, and in thine own good time, and according to thy pleasure, prosper the issue. Pour into me a spirit of humility; let nothing be done but in devout obedience to thy will, thankfulness for thine unspeakable mercies, and love to thine adorable son Christ Jesus. AMEN.

SELECTIONS FROM

The Religious State

BY

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

THOMAS AQUINAS (THOMAS OF AQUINO)

Was born at his father's castle of Roccasecca in Neopolitan territory about 1226, and died at the monastery of Fossanova, March 12, 1274. The titles of *Doctor Communis* ("Universal Doctor"), *Doctor Angelicus* ("Angelical Doctor"), *Princeps Scholasticorum* ("Prince of Scholastics"), *Doctor Ecclesiæ* ("Doctor of the Church") . . . "Patron of all Catholic Schools," were conferred on him. In his fifth year he was sent for his early education to the monastery of Monte Cassino, where his father's brother Sinibald was abbot. Later he studied in Naples. He entered the Dominican order in 1243, and his family sent him to Cologne to study under Albertus Magnus. He taught in Paris for several years, and there wrote certain of his works, and began others. At the solicitation of Pope Urban IV. he took up his residence in Rome. On July 18, 1323, he was pronounced a saint by John XXII. at Avignon. He had two great gifts—talent for systematizing and the power of simple and lucid expression. "The passion of his soul was the search for the truth involving the inner struggle for the knowledge of God." His writings cover a wide field—exegetical, homiletical, liturgical, dogmatic, apologetic, ethical, and philosophical. His principal works are: "A Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences of Peter Lombard," the "Summa Theologiæ" (this is the first attempt at a complete theological system), "Quæstiones Disputatæ et Quodlibetales," and "Opuscula Theologica."

That the Perfection of the Spiritual Life Is to Be Understood Absolutely According to Charity

At the outset of our work we must bear in mind that the word "perfect" is used in several senses. A thing may be absolutely perfect (*simpliciter*), or it may be perfect relatively (*secundum quid*). That which is perfect absolutely attains the end to which, according to its own nature, it is adapted. That which is relatively perfect is that which attains to the perfection of one of those qualities which are concomitant to its own nature. Thus, an animal is said to be perfect absolutely when it attains to its end in so far as to lack nothing necessary to the integrity of animal life; when, for instance, it possesses the requisite number and the proper disposition of its limbs, and the faculties necessary for performing the operations of animal life. An animal is, on the other hand perfect relatively, if it be perfect in any attribute concomitant to its nature, its color, for instance, its odor, etc.

In the spiritual life a man may be called perfect absolutely, *i.e.*, perfect in that wherein

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the spiritual life principally consists. He may, also, be perfect relatively, *i.e.*, perfect in some quality which is a condition of the spiritual life. Now, the spiritual life consists, principally, in charity. For he that is without charity is spiritually naught. Hence St. Paul says (1 Cor. 13:2), "If I should have all prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."[1] And the blessed Apostle John declares, that the whole spiritual life consists in love, saying, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). Therefore, he that is perfect in charity is said to be perfect in the spiritual life absolutely. But he that is perfect relatively is perfect in something incidental to the spiritual life. This is evident from the words of Holy Scripture. St. Paul considers charity as the chief element in perfection. He enumerates several virtues, such as mercy, benignity, and humility, and then concludes by saying, "But above all these things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3). Some men are also said to be perfect in point of understanding, "In malice be children, and in

[1] The Scripture quotations follow the Vulgate.

sense be perfect," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:20). Elsewhere in the same epistle, he bids them "be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10); altho, as has been said, a man who has perfect knowledge, without charity, must be judged to be nothing. Thus also, a man may be said to be perfect in patience which "worketh a perfect work," as St. James says, perfect also in other virtues. There is nothing surprizing in this manner of speaking, for persons may be perfect in their vices. Thus we may talk of a man being "a perfect thief" or "a perfect robber." Indeed, this mode of expression is used in Holy Scripture, for Isaiah says (chap. 30:6), "his heart (*i.e.*, the heart of the fool) will work iniquity to perfect hypocrisy."

Perfection Is Understood to Mean Both the Love of God and the Love of Our Neighbor

The perfection of the spiritual life may be understood as signifying principally perfection, as it regards charity. Now there are two precepts of charity, one pertaining to the love of God, the other referring to the love of our neighbor. These two precepts bear a certain order to each other, proportioned to the order

of charity. That which is chiefly to be loved, by charity, is the Supreme Good, which makes us happy—that is to say, God. In the next place, we are, by charity, to love our neighbor, who is, by certain social bonds, united to us, either by the anticipation of beatitude, or in the enjoyment of it. Hence, we are bound in charity to love our neighbor, in order that together with him we may arrive at beatitude.

Our Lord establishes this order of charity in the gospel of Matt. 22:37, where he says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. This is the first and greatest commandment; and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Thus the perfection of the spiritual life consists primarily and principally in the love of God. Hence the Lord, speaking to Abraham, says, "I am the almighty God; walk before me and be perfect" (Gen. 17:1). We walk before God, not with bodily footsteps, but with the affections of the mind. The perfection of the spiritual life consists, secondarily, in the love of our neighbor. Therefore when the Lord had said, "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44), and had added several other precepts regarding charity to our neighbor, he concluded by saying, " Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."

Of the Perfection of Divine Love Which Exists In God Alone

In each of the two divisions of charity there are many degrees. As regards the love of God, the first and supreme degree of perfection of divine love belongs to God alone. This is the case on account both of the One who is loved, and of the one who loves. It is the case on account of the loved one, because every object is loved in proportion to the qualities which make it lovable. It is the case on account of the lover, because an object is loved in proportion to the whole capacity of the one who loves. Now, as every object is lovable in proportion to its goodness, the goodness of God, which is infinite, must be infinitely lovable. But no creature can love infinitely, because no finite power is able to elicit an infinite act. Therefore, God alone, whose power of loving equals his goodness, can love himself perfectly in the first degree of perfection.

Of the Perfection of Divine Love Which Exists In Those Who Have Attained to Blessedness

[That is, in heaven.]

The only mode of loving God perfectly which is possible to rational creatures is the mode which belongs to him that loves. In this manner a rational creature loves God with all the completeness of his nature. This is made clear in the precept of divine love. We read in Deuteronomy (6:5), "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength." St. Luke (10:27) adds, "and with all thy mind"; as if the "heart" regulated the intention, the "mind" the thought, the "soul" the affections, and the "strength" the activities. For all these must be devoted to the love of God. We must remember that this precept may be fulfilled in a twofold manner. When anything is perfect, nothing is wanting to it. Hence, when the love of God is complete and perfect, he is loved with the whole heart, and soul, and strength; so that there is nothing within us which is not actually turned to God.

This perfect mode of love is not possible to those who are on the way to heaven, but

only to those who have reached their goal. Hence, St. Paul writing to the Philippians says (chap. 3:12), "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend." He writes as if he were hoping for perfection when he should have reached his goal, and when he should have received the palm of the blessed. But St. Paul does not use the word "attaining" in the sense of entire possession or perfect comprehension, for God in this sense is incomprehensible to every creature. By "attaining" he means reaching the end which he has been following and seeking. In heaven the understanding and the will of every rational creature is turned to God; since it is in the fruition of the Godhead that the beatitude of heaven consists. For beatitude exists not in habit, but in act. And, since the rational creatures will in heaven cleave to God, the Supreme Truth, as to its last end, all its activities will, by intention, likewise be directed to that last end, and will all be disposed toward the attainment of that end. Consequently, in that perfection of happiness the rational creature will love God with its whole heart; since its whole intention in all its thoughts, deeds, and affections, will be wholly directed to him. It will love God with its whole mind, for its mind will be ever ac-

tually fixt on him, beholding him, and seeing all things in him, and judging of all things according to his truth. It will love God with its whole soul, for all its affection will be uninterruptedly fixt on him, and for his sake it will love all things. It will love God with all its strength, since his love will be the motive governing all its exterior acts. This, then, is the second mode of perfect love, and this love is the portion only of the blessed.

Of the Perfection of Divine Love Which Is Necessary to Salvation

There is another way in which we love God with our whole heart and soul and strength. We so love him, if there be nothing in us which is wanting to divine love; that is to say, if there is nothing which we do not, actually or habitually, refer to God. We are given a precept concerning this form of divine love.

First, we are taught to refer everything to God as to our End by the words of the apostle (1 Cor. 10:31), "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." We fulfil this precept when we order our life to the service of God; and when, in consequence, all our actions are virtually directed to him, save those that are

sinful, which therefore withdraw us from him. While we act thus, we love God with our whole heart.

Secondly, we love God with our whole mind when we subject our understanding to him, believing what has been divinely transmitted to us, according to the words of St. Paul (2 Cor. 10:5), "Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ."

Thirdly, we love God with our whole soul when all that we love is loved in God, and when we refer all our affections to the love of him. St. Paul expresses this love in the following words: "For whether we be transported in mind it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for you; for the charity of Christ presseth us" (2 Cor. 5:13).

Fourthly, we love God with our whole strength, when all our words and works are established in divine charity according to the precept of St. Paul, "Let all your things be done in charity" (1 Cor. 16:14). This, then, is the third degree of perfection of divine love, to which all are bound of necessity and by precept. But the second degree is not possible in this life, save to one who, like our Lord Jesus Christ, is, at the same time, both traveling on the road to heaven and enjoying the happiness of the blessed.

The Perfection of Divine Love Which Is a Matter of Counsel

When St. Paul had said to the Philippians, "Not as tho I had already attained, or were already perfect," he continued, "but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend." Shortly afterward he added, " Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded." From these words it is plain that, altho the perfection of the blessed is not possible to us in this life, we ought, nevertheless, to endeavor as far as we can to emulate it. Now, it is in this effort that consists the perfection in this life, to which we are invited by the counsels.

It is abundantly clear, that the human heart is more intensely attracted to one object in proportion as it is withdrawn from a multiplicity of desires. Therefore, the more a man is delivered from solicitude concerning temporal matters, the more perfectly he will be enabled to love God. Hence St. Augustine says, *De diversis Quæstionibus,* 83, that the hope of gaining or keeping material wealth is the poison of charity; that as charity increases, cupidity diminishes; and that when charity becomes perfect, cupidity ceases to exist. Hence, all the counsels which call man to perfection tend to withdraw his affections

Thomas Aquinas

from temporal objects; so that his soul is enabled the more freely to turn to God by contemplating him, loving him, and fulfilling his will.

[The author in subsequent chapters states as means of attaining perfection, the renunciation of earthly possessions and of earthly ties and matrimony, and the abnegation of one's own will, and argues that these belong especially to the religious (*i.e.*, monastic) state. He then treats of brotherly and neighborly love, and gives the constituents of "the state of perfection."]

The State of Perfection Is a Condition Befitting Bishops and Religious

[It will be recognized that by "religious" is meant "monastics."]

From all that has been said it is easy to see which are the classes of men whom the state of perfection befits. We know that there are three roads to the perfection of divine love, to wit the giving up of material possessions; the sacrifice of marriage and of earthly ties; and total self-denial either by death for Christ, or by the abnegation of self-will. Now, they who by vow dedicate their whole lives to these works of perfection manifestly embrace the state of perfection. And, as in every religious order these three vows are made, it is plain that every form of religious life is included in the state of perfection.

Again, we have pointed out that there are three elements in the perfection of brotherly love. It is necessary to perfect brotherly love, first, that a man may love his enemies and assist them; secondly, that he may lay down his life for the brethren either by exposing himself to the danger of death or by devoting his whole life to their service; and thirdly, that he minister to their spiritual needs. Now, bishops are bound to fulfil these three offices of charity. As they undertake the entire charge of their churches, wherein oftentimes many will be found to hate, persecute, and revile them, they are under the obligation of repaying their enemies and persecutors by benevolence and charity, after the example of the apostles, whose successors they are, and who dwelt among those most hostile to them and labored for their conversion. Thus were verified the words of our Lord (Matt. 10:16), "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." For, altho the apostles were, so to speak, torn by their enemies, they were not destroyed, but on the contrary they converted those who maltreated them. St. Augustine in his book, *De Sermone Domini in monte,* has the following commentary on the words, "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39): "These words (he says), inviting us to mercy, appeal

most to such as have to minister to those whom they love, whether they be children or men of frenzied brain. For from such persons they suffer much; and they are prepared, if need be, to suffer more. Thus, the great Physician and Master of souls instructs his disciples that they must bear with serenity the follies of those whose salvation they desire to secure. For crime is an indication of a weak mind, as innocence is a proof of perfect strength." Hence St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, "We are reviled and we bless; we are persecuted and we suffer it; we are blasphemed and we entreat" (1 Cor. 4:12).

Bishops are further bound to sacrifice their lives for the salvation of those committed to them, and thus to put in practise the words of our Lord, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep" (John 10:11). Speaking of these words St. Gregory says, "In the gospel which has been read to you, beloved brethren, you learn both a lesson for yourselves and the danger which threatens us. There is set before us both the contempt of death, with which we ought to be inspired, and the model that we ought to imitate." He further adds, "Our first duty is in charity to distribute our goods to our sheep; and we are further bound, if need be, to serve them by our death. . . . The

wolf that cometh upon the sheep signifies any unjust seducer or oppressor of the faithful and the lowly. He that is no true shepherd, but only bears the semblance of such, will leave his sheep and take to flight, being too fearful of death to dare to resist iniquity." From these words it is clear, that it is one of the duties of those discharging the episcopal office to face death for the sake of the church committed to them.

Hence, those who undertake this office are bound to practise such perfection of charity as consists in the sacrifice of their life for the brethren. In the same manner, a bishop is bound by his office to dispense spiritual gifts to his neighbor, and thus to become a mediator between God and man, acting in the place of him who is "the one Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2). Moses, speaking as a type of our Lord, said, "I was the mediator and stood between the Lord and you, at that time" (Deut. 5:1). Hence, a bishop must, in the name of his people, offer up prayers and supplications to God. "For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). And, on the other hand, he must act with regard to his people as the vicar of

God, giving to his flock by the power of the Lord, judgment, instruction, example, and sacraments. St. Paul says, "For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:10). Again, in the same epistle (13:3), he says, "Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me?" Again (1 Cor. 9:11), he uses these words, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, it is a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" Now a bishop, at his ordination or consecration, and a religious at his profession, engages himself to this degree of perfection. St. Paul encourages St. Timothy to its practise, in the following words: "Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast confessed a good confession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). This "good confession" is interpreted by the gloss to mean ordination. Hence, bishops, as well as religious, are bound to a state of perfection. And, as human contracts are drawn up with certain ceremonies, so, both the consecration of bishops and the profession of religious, are solemnized by certain rites and blessings. Dionysius (*Ecclesiastica Hierarchia,* 6), speaking of monks, says, "On this account the holy law has given them perfect grace, and has vouchsafed to bestow it on them

with a certain sanctifying ceremonial (*invocatione*)."

[The remaining chapters deal with the episcopal and pastoral offices and functions.]

A Prayer From the Greek Church Liturgy

We bless and praise and magnify thee, O God of our fathers, who hast led us out of the shadows of night once more into the light of day. Unto thy loving-kindness we make our entreaty; be merciful to our misdeeds; accept our prayers in the fulness of thy compassions, for thou art our refuge from one generation to another, O merciful and almighty God. Suffer the true sun of thy righteousness to shine in our hearts, enlighten our reason, and purify our senses; that so we may walk honestly as in the day, in the way of thy commandments, and reach at last the life eternal, where we shall rejoice in thy inaccessible life. For thou art the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light. AMEN.

SELECTION FROM

Meister Eckhart's Sermons

FROM THE TRANSLATION

BY

CLAUD FIELD, M.A.

JOHANNES ECKHART (OR ECKHARDT)

German scholastic and mystic, called "Meister (or Master) Eckhart"; he was born at Hochheim, and the date of his birth was probably 1260, and of his death 1327. He joined the Dominicans at Erfurt. Later on he was prior at Erfurt and provincial in Thuringia. He was made provincial of his order for Saxony in 1303, and vicar-general in 1307. In 1311 he was appointed by the general chapter of Naples as teacher at Paris. After that time he went to Strasburg, then to Cologne. He was arraigned by the Archbishop of Cologne for heresy, but the accusation was not sustained. Two years after his death his writings were condemned by a papal bull of John XXII. "His thoughts are concentrated on the divine being in its unity and trinity; on the relation between God and the human soul; on the nature of the soul; on regeneration and union with God." His material is scattered through a number of works. Consult: Pfeiffer, "Meister Eckhart," second volume of "Deutsche Mystiker" (Leipzig, 1857); Martensen, "Meister Eckhart" (Hamburg, 1842); Preger, "Geschichte der deutschen Mystik im Mittelalter" (Leipzig, 1874); "Meister Eckhart's mystische Schriften" (Berlin, 1903); "Schriften und Predigen" (Jena, 1909); Hartmann, "Die Geheimlehre in der christlische Religion nach den Erklarungen von Meister Eckhart" (Leipzig, 1895); Vaughan, "Hours with the Mystics" (London, 1860).

Outward and Inward Morality

[The grace of God.—1 Cor. 15 : 10.]

Grace is from God, and works in the depth of the soul whose powers it employs. It is a light which issues forth to do service under the guidance of the Spirit. The divine light permeates the soul, and lifts it above the turmoil of temporal things to rest in God. The soul can not progress except with the light which God has given it as a nuptial gift; love works the likeness of God into the soul. The peace, freedom and blessedness of all souls consist in their abiding in God's will. Toward this union with God for which it is created the soul strives perpetually. Fire converts wood into its own likeness, and the stronger the wind blows, the greater grows the fire. Now by the fire understand love, and by the wind the Holy Spirit. The stronger the influence of the Holy Spirit, the brighter grows the fire of love; but not all at once, rather gradually as the soul grows. Light causes flowers and plants to grow and bear fruit; in animals it produces life, but in men blessedness. This comes from the grace of

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God, who uplifts the soul, for if the soul is to grow God-like it must be lifted above itself.

To produce real moral freedom, God's grace and man's will must cooperate. As God is the Prime Mover of nature, so also he creates free impulses toward himself and to all good things. Grace renders the will free that it may do everything with God's help, working with grace as with an instrument which belongs to it. So the will arrives at freedom through love, nay, becomes itself love, for love unites with God. All true morality, inward and outward, is comprehended in love, for love is the foundation of all the commandments.

All outward morality must be built upon this basis, not on self-interest. As long as man loves something else than God, or outside God, he is not free, because he has not love. Therefore there is no inner freedom which does not manifest itself in works of love. True freedom is the government of nature in and outside man through God; freedom is essential existence unaffected by creatures. But love often begins with fear; fear is the approach to love: fear is like the awl which draws the shoemaker's thread through the leather.

As for outward works, they are ordained for this purpose—that the outward man may be directed to God. But the inner work, the

work of God in the soul, is the chief matter; when a man finds this within himself, he can let go externals. No law is given to the righteous, because he fulfils the law inwardly, and bears it in himself, for the least thing done by God is better than all the work of creatures. But this is intended for those who are enlightened by God and the Holy Scriptures.

But here on earth man never attains to being unaffected by external things. There never was a saint so great as to be immovable. I can never arrive at a state when discord shall be as pleasing to my ears as harmony. Some people wish to do without good works. I say, this can not be. As soon as the disciples received the Holy Ghost, they began to work. When Mary sat at the feet of our Lord that was her school time. But afterward when Christ went to heaven and she received the Holy Spirit, she began to serve and was a handmaid of the disciples. When saints become saints, they begin to work, and so gather to the refuge of everlasting safety.

How can a man abide in love, when he does not keep God's commands which issue forth from love? How can the inner man be born in God, when the outer man abides not in the following of Christ, in self-mortification, and in suffering, for there is no being

born of God, except through Christ. Love is the fulfilling of all commands; therefore however much man strives to reach this freedom, the body can never quite attain thereto, and must be ever in conflict. Seeing that good works are the witness of the Holy Ghost, man can never do without them. The aim of man is not outward holiness by works, but life in God, yet this last expresses itself in works of love.

Outward as well as inward morality helps to form the idea of true Christian freedom. We are right to lay stress on inwardness, but in this world there is no inwardness without an outward expression. If we regard the soul as the formulative principle of the body, and God as the formulative principle of the soul, we have a profounder principle of ethics than is found in pantheism. The fundamental thought of this system is the real distinction between God and the world, together with their real inseparability, for only really distinct elements can interpenetrate each other.

The inner work is first of all the work of God's grace in the depth of the soul which subsequently distributes itself among the faculties of the soul, in that of reason appearing as belief, in that of will as love, and in that of desire as hope. When the divine light penetrates the soul, it is united with God as

light with light. This is the light of faith. Faith bears the soul to heights unreachable by her natural senses and faculties.

As the peculiar faculty of the eye is to see form and color, and of the ear to hear sweet tones and voices, so is aspiration peculiar to the soul. To relax from ceaseless aspiration is sin. This energy of aspiration directed to and grasping God, as far as is possible for the creature, is called hope, which is also a divine virtue. Through this faculty the soul acquires such great confidence that she deems nothing in the divine nature beyond her reach.

The third faculty is the inward will, which, always turned to God like a face, absorbs to itself love from God. According to the diverse directions in which redemptive grace through the Holy Spirit is imparted to the different faculties of men, it finds corresponding expression as one of the Spirit's seven gifts. This impartation constitutes man's spiritual birth, which brings him out of sin into a state of grace, while natural birth makes him a sinner.

As God can be seen only by his own light, so he can be loved only by his own love. The merely natural man is incapable of this, because nature by itself is incapable of responding to the divine love, and is confined within its own circle. Therefore it is necessary for

grace, which is a simple supernatural power, to elevate the natural faculties to union in God above the merely temporal objects of existence. The possibility of love to God is grounded in the relative likeness between man and God. If the soul is to reach its moral goal, *i.e.*, godlikeness, it must become inwardly like God through grace and a spiritual birth which is the spring of true morality.

The inner work that man has to do is the practical realization of grace; without this, all outward work is ineffectual for salvation. Virtue is never mere virtue, it is either from God, or through God, or in God. All the soul's works which are to inherit an everlasting recompense must be carried on in God. They are rewarded by him in proportion as they are carried on in him, for the soul is an instrument of God, whereby he carries on his work.

The essence of morality is inwardness, the intensity of will from which it springs, and the nobleness of the aim for which it is practised. When a good work is done by a man, he is free of it, and through that freedom is liker and near to his Original than he was before.

The moral task of man is a process of spiritualization. All creatures are go-betweens, and we are placed in time that by diligence in

spiritual business we may grow liker and nearer to God. The aim of man is beyond the temporal—in the serene region of the everlasting present.

In this sense the new birth of man is the focus toward which all creation strives, because man is the image of God after the likeness of which the world is created. All time strives toward eternity or the timeless now, out of which it issued at creation. The merely temporal life in itself is a negation of real being, because it depends on itself and not on the deepest foundation of life; therefore also natural love is cramped, finite, and defective. It must through grace be lifted to the highest sphere of existence, and attain to freedom outside the narrow confines of the natural. Thereby love becomes real love, because only that is real which is comprehended and loved in its essence. Only by grace man comes from the temporal and transitory to be one with God. This lifting of manifoldness to unity is the supreme aim of ethics; by this the divine birth is completed on the side of man.

This passage from nothingness to real being, this quitting of oneself, is a birth accompanied by pain, for by it natural love is excluded. All grief except grief for sin comes from love of the world. In God is neither sorrow, nor grief, nor trouble. Wouldst thou

be free from all grief and trouble, abide and walk in God and to God alone. As long as the love of the creature is in us, pain can not cease.

This is the chief significance of the suffering of Christ for us, that we cast all our grief into the ocean of his suffering. If thou sufferest only regarding thyself, from whatever cause it may be, that suffering causes grief to thee, and is hard to bear. But if thou sufferest regarding God and him alone, that suffering is not grievous nor hard to bear, because God bears the load. The love of the cross must swallow up our personal grief. Whoso does not suffer from love, for him sorrow is sorrow and grievous to bear; but whoso suffers from love he sorrows not, and his suffering is fruitful in God. Therefore is sorrow so noble; he who sorrows most is the noblest. Now no mortal's sorrow was like the sorrow which Christ bore; therefore he is far nobler than any man. Verily were there anything nobler than sorrow, God would have redeemed man thereby. Sorrow is the root of all virtue.

Through the higher love the whole life of man is to be elevated from temporal selfishness to the spring of all love, to God: man will again be master over nature by abiding in God and lifting her up to God.

SELECTIONS FROM

The Sermons and Conferences

OF

JOHANN TAULER

JOHANN TAULER

German mystic; born at Strasburg about 1300; died there June 16, 1361. Attracted by the ascetic life of the Dominicans, Tauler joined that order at Strasburg at an early age. Nicholas of Strasburg was one of his teachers at Cologne. During Lent, 1339, he appeared at Basel, having been driven from Strasburg, together with the other Dominicans, in consequence of suspending mass pursuant to the interdict of John XXII. He is known to have been there at the beginning of 1346, and with Henry of Nördlingen was the center of a numerous body of Friends of God. In 1347, or 1348 at the latest, he was preaching at Strasburg. The following are among his works: the "Medulla animæ" (Frankfort, 1644); "Sermon des gross gelarten in gnade" (Leipsic, 1498; German translation, Augsburg, 1508; Basel, 1521; Cologne, 1543; also editions in Latin, German Roman Catholic retranslation, and in Italian, Dutch, and French). Later editions, going back to the old prints, are: Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1826; and Berlin, 1841. In English are: "Golden Thoughts on the Higher Life" (Glasgow, 1897); "The Inner War, 36 Sermons for Festivals by John Tauler" (translated with Introduction by A. W. Hutton, London, 1905); "Conferences and Sermons of John Tauler: Being His Spirit Doctrine" (first complete translation by Rev. W. Elliot, Washington, D. C., 1911).

Union With God

[That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee . . . and I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one.—John 17: 21-23.]

To this union St. Paul had attained, for he says: "And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Let us ask how we, too, may be made one with God. Not otherwise than by losing ourselves and forgetting ourselves, and then by being made over again in God by God's Spirit. For as long as a man is self-conscious, even tho he have God and is even conscious of him, just so long is he not one, but two—he has not become one with God; this is multiplicity and not perfect unity. In unity a man loses multiplicity. True unity is the state in which a man finds himself solely in one, the one that is called and is God. In this state a man has, as it were, lost his selfhood in God; so that he has no joy in self, no thought of self, no outward life of self. Nor does it seem to him that it is his own self that knows and loves either God or creatures—all seems done by God. Self is absorbed as it were in God.

All creatures seek after this unity; all

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multiplicity struggles toward it—the universal aim of all life is always this unity. Every creature comes forth from this unity by an immediate creative act, and each one tends again to be absorbed in its entire existence into indivisible unity, according to each one's capability. All activity of mind and body, and all love, as well as all unrest, has an end and purpose; it all tends toward entire rest; and this rest is to be found nowhere but in the one, indivisible unity that is God. All that flows outward is to flow backward into its source—God. And when this has happened, and not before, do we find rest and tranquility. When all that goes to make up a man's being has become lovingly one with God, then all the soul's cries are hushed, and the unrest of longing and of acting has ceased. Nature itself universally craves this unity, and consumes everything, even its own life, in its strivings to attain to it; but to true unity can nature never come except in God, the only being wholly one. And O how anxious, how uncertain, is the soul of man whilst deprived of this union! How can he abide out of it a single instant! How can he find in himself aught worth knowing or loving as long as he is out of God

What is the best way to enter into God and to be made one with him? Certainly there

is but one way: To die to self; totally to give up all self-seeking, all multiplicity. If thou wilt be made white, thou must wash off the black; the less black, the more white. The less thou art multiplied, the more shalt thou be single-minded and single-hearted. God does not work in thee rightly and by himself alone, as long as thou art multiplied; his living work in thee must be one. The more the soul's powers are detached from outward things and gathered into one in the interior life, all the stronger grows God's action inwardly, and all the diviner and more perfect. This state no man can achieve except by dying to himself. The sooner and the more truly and the more perfectly he dies to himself, the sooner, the more truly and the more perfectly will he find his life made one with God's. Therefore, Christ died a physical death that he might show us the way to die a spiritual death. That he might rise from the dead into immortality, he must die to mortality. If we would reach a condition of unity, we must die to multiplicity; we must die to all mortality, to all self-ownership, to all divisibility. Unity has no division; division is lost and so is multiplicity—all made one in unity. Of Christ we read that, "Rising again from the dead, he dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him" (Rom. 6:

9). Out of death comes life that dies no more. There is no true and undying life in us except the life that comes forth from death. If water is to become hot, then cold must die out of it. If wood is to be made fire, then the nature of wood must die. The life we seek can not be in us, it can not become our very selves, we can not be itself, unless we gain it by first ceasing to be what we are; we acquire this life through death.

In very truth there is, rightly speaking, but one death and one life. . However many deaths there may seem to be, they all are but one, namely, the death a man dies to his own will, to his sense of proprietorship, to division and multiplicity and activity—in so far as this is possible to a creature. And there is one life, and only one, namely, the one ineffable, incomprehensible, uncreated, essential, divine life. Toward this life all other life hurries on, is driven forward, streams along, being irresistibly drawn to possess it. The nearer our life comes to this essential life, and the more it is likened to it, the more truly do we live, for in this and from this life is all life, and not otherwise. Any life that lives apart from this, to it may be said these words: "Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead" (Rev. 3:1).

Whosoever will have this divine life living

within him, made most essentially and most truly his own, such a one must most essentially and most truly die to himself. Whosoever fails to die will fail to live. And whosoever totally dies to self, such a one is wholly made alive in God and without any separation. And this death has many degrees, just as life has. A man, for example, may die a thousand deaths in a single day, and each is instantly followed by a joyous life in God—death is no longer death. This happens perforce, because God can not refuse the offering of death nor resist its plea for life. And the stronger death is and the more complete, so is the life that responds to it all the stronger and more integral; just as death is, so shall life be. And as life succeeds to death, so does life prepare a man to die a more perfect death to himself.

And it is thus that a man dies to himself: if he meekly accepts an insult for God's sake, if he curbs his inclination for inner or outward joy for the same divine motive; if in any way whatsoever, in pleasure or in pain, he bridles his wayward will for God's sake in words or deeds, in labor or rest, in seeing or tasting; if he bears unjust reproof in silence and in all patience; if in any of his unmortified tendencies he dies to self, he begins to live to God. At first he yields to this

holy death of selfhood reluctantly and with much pain; later on he grows used to it, and to die to self and to live to God grows into a holy habit. No matter how small the death an earnest man dies to himself, it wins him a great life, and this great life heartens him to die another and a yet greater death. And soon it comes to pass that the most joyous thing in life is to die to oneself, far more joyous than any life that is lived for self's sake. For life is now found only in death, and light shineth only in darkness. In outward things a man may so constantly die to self that in course of time there is nothing left in him of any inclination to them that are not dead. Then, indeed, he hath fought a good fight; and yet in his interior life there is much that must die.

When one is truly mortified or dead to his selfhood, then all things are his and he can use them moderately without danger. Indeed, no man has real and reasonable joy in created things, until he has first gone forth out of all joy in them for the love of God—until he has died to them and they have died to him. Only after that canst thou turn again to their use, without feeling anxiety lest thou misuse them. No man truly loves his father and mother, his sisters and brothers and all his other friends, with the love that

is in God, until he has first given them up and wholly died to them out of love for God; until that happens they are rather enemies to his spiritual welfare than friends. Therefore, our Lord teaches: "For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:35, 36).

But it is only a lesser death when one has died to outward things; for when a man has sincerely renounced the world and all its superfluities, and entered upon an interior and divine life, it is an easy matter to be quite dead to external enjoyments. To him the death he has yet to die is hidden. What bitterness can he suffer who is full of the sweetness of a devout life? What battle can he have to fight who has escaped from the clutches of his enemy, and is journeying safely along the way of peace? If a man be truly converted to lead a perfect life inwardly, no matter what outward things cross his path, they do not touch his interior life. Mary was turned to Christ in all her inner faculties, and hence she sat at his feet unconcerned about the many things that troubled Martha, who complained about her. Mary thought not at all of justifying herself—quite other

things absorbed her thoughts and her feelings and her love. So does it happen with any soul that is turned inward to God and away from all transitory things—turned to God, revealed within him, and by no intermediary, but directly. Whether such a soul wills it or not, it must forget everything but God. All images of things created are gone; such a man has within him that which is the original of all things. He is liberated from creatures; he has no room in his soul for figures and types, and strange happenings and contradictions make no impression on him.

Such men as these St. Paul may have had in view when he said "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3: 3). But now it is to be remarked, that they may progress to a yet closer union; for they are hid with Christ, and are therefore two and not one with him. On the other hand, our Lord prayed to his Father that "they may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee." As if it were not in what made Father and Son different persons, but rather in what made them one essence, one life, one divine operation—as if he prayed that this union might be granted us and perfected in us, as far as we are capable of it. Is it not true to say that to bring about this unity with God's being, his life and operation, a thousand times

more perfect death to self and to creatures must be experienced? If God is to go into the soul, nature must go out totally, even to the last atom; fire and water can not dwell together in one. He whose life is to be made God's life, must quickly and entirely die to any other life. If a man be already averse to the things of this earthly existence, then he more easily dies to himself; but whether or not this be so, the man who will have God to live within him and he his only support and only comfort, must be dead to all transitory things and they dead to him, absolutely stript of their support and void of their comfort. Life has its hiding-place in death; consolation has its hiding-place in desolation. When the outward man is hushed still, then the inward man begins to live; then does he begin truly to speak his happy words, according to the prophet: "My soul refused to be comforted; I remembered God and was delighted and was exercised, and my spirit swooned away" (Ps. 76:3, 4). The outward craves the outward life in everything. It is true that the outward life longs for God's help in some exterior form, as the psalmist says: "It is good for me to adhere (that is to say, exteriorly) to my God" (Ps. 67:28). But even this comfort has a savor of self-seeking, and it, too, must die out of the soul.

The death of self and the union with God that we have been considering affects all the powers of the soul, even the most interior ones. The will must efface its symbols and images and rest motionless; the understanding, including knowledge and memory, and, indeed, all mental powers, must set aside, as far as possible, the objects of their activity. Listen to our Lord's words: "He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it" (Matt. 10:39). It is a hard death to the soul, when all natural lights in it and all its faculties go out in darkness; and yet a harder death when even the bright rays of light shed by God's own gifts, must be quenched in darkness; for these are not God, and God alone must finally content the soul. All these are, as it were, but a part of God and not God one and indivisible.

But in truth it is only when all that lives within a man, and all that gives him light, has died out and gone from him—it is then, and only then, that he finds his real soul—never otherwise. Does he not find it? Can you say that in such a state he rather has utterly lost it? No, by no means; for freedom of the will yet remains, and responsibility for choosing to act or not to act. Does he not now stand in control of his spiritual powers to will and to act, and how to choose? See

how our Savior and our Model acted in his agony: "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). As if to say: I have no will; but thou, Father, shalt have my will, for I am stript of my will and dead to it, and now in thy will I am absorbed and restored to life.

Union with God is not action, in the human meaning of the term, nor knowing, nor loving with diversity; for in God all is one and all is rest and peace. Knowing and loving, bringing forth and being brought forth, and all manner of simply human activity, is the product of diversity. In God, in this One, is all action ended and unified, and we are made one in God through Christ. AMEN.

Three Foundation-Stones: Humility, Love and Detachment

[Be ye humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your care upon him, for he hath a care of you. Be sober and watch; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. AMEN. —1 Pet. 5:6-11.]

Dear children, this is the teaching of St. Peter's very instructive epistle, giving us a

perfect doctrine, by means of which we can complete all that holy Church has done for us the entire year past, with which, if we take it seriously, we shall find it to coincide perfectly.

"Be humbled," he says, "under the mighty hand of God," in which we see the essence, life, and work that a man must have in all his devout practises. It consists in three things, all most essential; so that if any one of them be lacking, the essence, life, and work of our piety comes to naught. The first is that we must be humble. Humility is the solid foundation on which the whole structure is to be built, if it is going to be worth anything in the sight of God. Whatever a man builds without this foundation falls down. The second thing is true and divine love for God and our neighbor. The third is genuine detachment from all things. With these three things a man reaches the perfection of a true and godlike life.

Dear children, God has by his grace implanted in us the beautiful virtue of humility, knowing how greatly we stand in need of it. In this he does us a great favor, for he thereby places in our souls a divine spark much closer to our nature than we may imagine. If humility seems an alien thing to us, that is to be blamed on pride. If human nature

be rightly ordered, we find matter for humility within us without fail. We can not expel it from its place there, for as we look into ourselves we find two great causes for it. One is our natural frailty. Every man can see how miserably needy he is, how many things he lacks, and how all that he gets fails to satisfy him. Nothing is better known than the inborn deficiencies of the natural man, and that just as every man comes from nothing, so all ends in nothingness—all of which furnishes material for humility. The other reason for humility is our sinful frailty, something perfectly plain to anyone who searches his interior. He finds in himself a bottomless depth of natural depravity. Unless God guarded him constantly by his merciful graces, how unspeakably ready would he not be to commit sin, even to fall into mortal sin, and to be condemned therefor to suffer eternally in hell among all the devils. Tell me, dear children, is not this a great cause for true humility? Thus our own nature inclines us to the practise of this holy virtue. Looking inward, looking outward, we find there is nothing good in us, nor of ourselves can we do any good.

The second virtue is true love of God, and this has God rooted in our nature; for by a law of our nature every man must love. Even humility is not an interior growth, but comes

from without, whereas love is inborn, as the venerable Bede teaches: "As it is impossible to live without a soul, so it is impossible to live without love." If a man, therefore, is naturally rightly ordered, he must love God more than himself or all creatures. It is a pitiful thing that man should pervert so noble a trait, turning deliberately away from God, his Creator and the Creator of all things, and inclining toward creatures.

The third virtue is prudence or discretion, which belongs to reason itself. Mark well, children, that every act of man that is not guided by discretion comes to naught, and is not pleasing to God. Therefore does St. Peter say in this epistle: "Be sober and watch." This means that discretion should soberly guide our whole life, our words and works, eating and sleeping and watching—let discretion direct all men in all states of life in all their conduct.

Dear children, let us return to the first virtue, humility: "Be ye humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation." Ah, dear children, when the time of visitation comes and God does not find us humble, it will be an evil thing for us without doubt; for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Therefore, the great-

er our humility, the greater the grace of God. If he finds us proud, he will crush us down; if he finds us lowly minded, he will undoubtedly raise us up. The mighty hand of God is wise and good, aye, it is kindly and loving: "Casting all your care upon God, for he careth for you." If this loving watch of God over us were his only favor, his daily care for all our spiritual and bodily needs the only gift he were to give us; if his loving intervention against our heartache and all misery were his single benefit to us, it alone ought to be enough in our eyes to inspire a return of love. It should cause us ceaselessly to adore his providence, to direct all our longings toward him alone, and to enkindle in our hearts a deep love of his holy will in ordering our life.

Again, dear children, does St. Peter speak: "Be sober and watch, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith." Now when the lion roars, all the beasts of the forest fall to the ground with terror, and he comes and tears them to pieces. And in like manner, when the evil spirit comes roaring upon poor, weak men, they instantly fall down helpless, and he comes and tears them to pieces. But St. Peter bids us be bold and vigilant, and bravely to

withstand the assaults of the demon with the weapons of holy faith. One should act like the garrison of a beleaguered city which knows that the enemy's army is superior in number. On whatever side the ramparts are weakest, there is concentrated the strongest defense —or the city and its defenders and treasures are lost. So must each one of us carefully mark the weakest side of his character, for there without doubt the evil one will deliver his fiercest attack—that is to say, where he finds the greatest tendency to vice.

Sometimes the devil's readiest temptation is to despondency. He shows a man his native frailty and his sinfulness, and tries to make him heavy-hearted on that account. And then he, as it were, roars in his ear: Art thou so foolish as to spend thy life in anguish and in penance? No! No! Live in joy. Enjoy thy carnal pleasures. Almighty God will give thee time for penance at the end of life. Have thy own will, enjoy creatures whilst thou art young and strong; when old age comes, then shalt thou become pious and serve God. Ah, dear children, what treacherous counsel is this. Be on your guard. Diligently watch while it is day, for soon eternal darkness will enshroud you. Regulate your life by no such false confidence, but rather by a wise understanding of what is a really God-guided life.

And let there be no turning back. See to it that God alone shall rule you. For it is our Lord Jesus Christ himself who says: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

Look into this matter, dear children, very carefully, for the evil one lays many a snare for you. One will say in time of temptation: O God, would that I had a father confessor in this my great distress; I wish I knew how I now stand with our dear Lord. Now, children, I know about this case, and I say to you, do not annoy your father confessor. Keep up good courage. Evil thoughts have come? Then let them come and let them go. Be at peace; think no more about it, but turn thy heart straight to God. Make no parley with thy temptation, but just let it alone. By debating about it in thy mind thou shalt suffer more misery than the demon himself has caused thee. All this trouble comes from excessive despondency, which may end by his suggesting despair, and saying: Everything thou dost is vain and useless—thou art lost forever.

The thing to do in such a case is to cast "all care upon God" and rest in him. Turn to the eternal God with unshaken trust in his goodness and mercy. Do as mariners do when threatened with shipwreck—cast thy anchor

deep down to the bottom of God's love and grace. Place thy confidence firmly in God our Lord. If it comes even to the end of life, and a man in deep distress shall but anchor all his hopes in God and die in that mind, it is truly a happy and a holy death.

Children, be well assured that a really godly man must dwell in the practise of divine hope just as much as in any other of the divine virtues; and that is a great help to him when at last he comes to meet death. But this must not be a false and deceitful confidence in God, trusting in which a man presumes to lead a sinful life; for whosoever trusts in God and on the strength of that lives wickedly, sins against the Holy Ghost. The confidence in God that I mean springs from the depths of true humility and love. It is based on consciousness of one's helplessness; it is a most reasonable recognition of the need of God's help; it is a part of a true and full and joyful conversion to God; for whosoever gives himself up to God loves and trusts God sincerely. Shalt thou not trust him who has already done thee so many favors? Before thou wast created God foresaw thy weakness; knew that thou wouldst sin, foresaw in his divine wisdom how it was that he would redeem all mankind from sin, namely, by the bitter death of our beloved, innocent Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, dear children, turn away from sin with all earnestness. I say to you that any man under temptation, who does not courageously resist, but stands halting and hesitating, not turning from sin with his whole heart for the sake of God, such a man the evil one pursues with the object of dragging him down into everlasting damnation. Dost thou really wish to overcome the demon? Then do thy part manfully, fly from sin, and say in thy inmost soul: O Eternal God, come to my help with thy divine grace, for I am firmly resolved never to commit mortal sin. Thus by thy good will and by thy resolute purpose thou shalt overcome the evil spirit and put him shamefully to flight.

Children, you should know what a disgraceful thing it is for a man endowed with reason to allow himself to be vanquished by the devil, to be led into grievous sin and to forfeit the grace of God. A man gifted with reason who gives up to the evil one is like a well-armed soldier who runs away from a fly. Think of the powerful weapons with which we can withstand the devil—our holy faith, the blessed sacrament, God's holy word, the glorious example of the saints and of all good men, the prayers of holy church, and more besides—all strong weapons against the demon. He has no greater force against these arms than a fly has against a big bear. Let but a man

bravely resist, and he never can be overcome. Therefore turn away from thy sins and cheerfully and manfully fight thy battle. See to it carefully that thou goest not into the next world without having fought and conquered the devil, nor without having sincerely repented of thy sins; for then thou shalt be the scoff of all those evil spirits, who will eternally torment thee. It will be a deeper pain to thee then that thou hast followed the devil than any other misery connected with thy sons. Furthermore, a man must examine his inmost soul, lest there should be aught there but just simply God and his eternal glory. For, alas, there are many men in all states of life who make a show of a good life, as if fancying that they can deceive the eternal God. No, not so; but in reality thou deceivest thyself, and thou losest the precious time of grace. Thou art so guilty before God that he permits the evil spirits to have power over thee, so that they will not let thee do any good work. Take heed, dear children, whilst it is day, lest the time of darkness overtake you, and the grace of God be withdrawn from you. Search deep into your hearts; have God there and only God, making him your only aim in life, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Such is not the way of men who follow not after God. Creatures are their object in life.

And if they find sorrow for sin beginning to stir their hearts, they run away from it, they go into another country or city, they start new ways of wickedness, and thus they leap into everlasting death. Or acting otherwise, such a one is caught in a panic and adopts a life of poverty, or enters a monastery. Others, again, obtain a securer refuge by entering an approved order, even one strictly enclosed.

Now it may happen that some have entered an order from motives not divine; but finding themselves there they say: Dear Lord, I thank thee eternally that I am here, and I will ever remain here, to love thee and serve thee. Blessed are all those who persevere in this holy state till death, for without doubt they will be saved. The least little work there done in holy obedience is nobler in God's eyes and more worthy of reward than many great works performed by one's own will. I declare to you in all truth that no lovelier offering can be made to the Almighty God than a truly humble and obedient heart. In a single instant a man can, by means of obedience and giving up of his own will to God, be made so humble that he will be led directly to God—more directly than if he spent ten years in practising high devotions. Take an example: suppose a man so full of God's grace that God

constantly dwelt with him, and was as personally present as he will be in heaven; and suppose him now to be required to pay a real obedience to God by some external act of charity. Such a one would humbly say to God: O beloved God, let me go out of thy presence and follow thy holy will in obedience; and this would please God more than to see that man enter eternal life surrounded by all the angels of heaven.

Children, this example is straight against all the religious men who go by their own will, and who do not quickly respond to God's will manifested to them in obedience. There are such men in communities; they lay out their devotions and other goods works for themselves. When obedience would draw them out to the active labors of their order, then is shown how little liberty of spirit they have —self-conceited men, with a God to rule them who is a divinity of their own appointment. A man truly obedient is always obedient, cheerfully dropping everything, even prayers and meditations, at the voice of lawful authority. If God is really in his heart, then does he offer himself in all meekness to the disposal of his superiors. It is this that leads him to union with God; without this he will lack God's favor. Obedience is that very noble virtue which is more pleasing to God than

any of the others, even when we obey in matters which are in themselves of little moment. The eternal Son of God was for our sakes made obedient to his heavenly Father, in his coming down from the Godhead to our poor human nature, and then in the embracing of his holy cross; finally in his cruel and bitter death. Therefore must we one and all be obedient men in all divine things and human things, interiorly and exteriorly, without murmuring or contradiction—if God shall do his work of love unhindered and continuously within our souls.

Yet this doctrine is directly opposed to the practise of those pious men who obey unwillingly. These make interpretations and excuses in order to avoid this beloved virtue, and they cleave to their own customary opinions. They insist on having their own way. I declare to you that such conduct separates you from God, from his graces, from the sweetness of his love—all this you will lack as long as you persist in a self-willed course.

Therefore, child, when thou beginnest a good work, humbly approach the fountain of divine grace, and crave that thou mayest begin and end it wholly to the praise and honor of God, sinking deep within thy soul till thou art fully conscious of thy own nothingness when without God's grace. In the quiet of

that interior life, search out very humbly what is God's all lovely will—rest upon that without further running about for motives. This is a better way than taking the whole world into thy counsel with a dissipated spirit. Any man who is conscious of having true humility of heart and real love of God, together with discretion, in such a man's soul God's work is greater than words can describe.

St. Peter teaches us that we suffer the same as do our brethren in the world. And, children, I say to you that we must suffer, whether we turn this side to escape or that side—we must suffer. We must be willing to suffer or go straight against God. Now there are many young people who risk life and limb in the service of the world, and their whole reward is to pamper their wretched bodies, food for worms as they are, and commit their souls to the devil. Such are the only wages the world pays to its hirelings. How different with you. You gladly serve God and suffer for his sake, and he will give you as your wages his own very self, together with the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life. O how gladly should you, his chosen friends, suffer for him, since for your sake he suffered shame, poverty, and all misery. Since the head of the human race, God's eternal Son Jesus Christ, has thus suffered, surely we his

members ought to blush for shame that we are not always glad to suffer. Who in this world has ever endured the blasphemy, disgrace, and shame that befell Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son? He, indeed, would continue thus to suffer for us were it now possible for him to do so. Daily and often in the day is he crucified in spirit by men's curses; constantly is he rejected and cast out, his wounds opened again and his innocent and precious blood poured out by every mortal sin that is committed. Think of the sacrilege, the blasphemy that is done him by unworthy communions, foul sinners taking him into their filthy souls, all full of deadly sensuality. Could such a wretch feel the wickedness of that profanation of God, his horror would be worse than that of Judas. For these men confess the Godhead of Jesus Christ, acknowledging him to be their God and their Creator, whereas this divinity of our Savior was not known to Judas. If God's true friends could feel a pain equal to the guilt of this sacrilege, a pain of a bodily kind as well as the spiritual grief of a loving heart, their very bones would be pierced to the marrow, and their souls would be wounded to their very depths. If they could turn away from God this foul indignity by offering up their own lives, death would be to them far more joyous than life.

Such then, dear children, is St. Peter's teaching of the right and the sure way: humility must be the foundation within us and without. Upon that, again, we build the house of the love of God, and we adorn it with the virtue of discretion. And all this God brings about by his days of visitation. Hence I declare to you, children, that those who set out toward perfection by ways of high reasoning—not traveling by this humble road of St. Peter—every one of them will fall into the pit of hell: for the higher the mountain the deeper the valley. May God grant that we shall be found resting on the right foundation. May God grant us to go forward by the threefold virtues of humility, love of God, and discretion. AMEN.

The Wide Sweep of Love

[For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Christ. Filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—Phil. 1: 8-11.]

Notice with what earnestness St. Paul calls God to witness of his deep love for his disciples. Had we a return of such love to the apostle and our benefactors generally, it

would greatly stimulate us to show ourselves worthy of our friends' affection for us, if for no higher motive than to satisfy their longing for our perfection. And when St. Paul says: "I pray that your charity may more and more abound," he means that it should greatly increase till it overflows and passes beyond every lower motive, and becomes love in all things perfect.

What is the best lesson we can ever learn? Is it not how to possess the greatest love and the best? God demands not great intelligence, nor profound penetration of mind, nor magnificent methods of spirituality, for all good spiritual practises obtain their merit from love. But what God requires of us is only love, for, St. Paul tells us, love "is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14). As to greatness of intellect and force of character, these are common to us and pagans and Jews; splendid achievements are common to the just and the unjust. It is only the possession of love that divides the false hearts from the true. "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Therefore before all arts have the art of loving. Inasmuch as God hath first loved us with an unspeakable love, so shall we love him in return, as St. Augustine teaches. And let our love never cease, never even lessen,

but always grow stronger. By love a man merits love; and the more a man loves the more is he made capable of loving.

Now the working of love is both inner and outer. The outer love is given to our neighbor, and the inner is given to God direct. For this latter love a man needs knowledge, as St. Paul says: "That your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding." We must not be content with good love; the apostle exhorts us to win the very best—he wishes that we may overflow with love. Knowledge is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and goes before love as a handmaiden before her mistress to do her service. Now true divine love thou must have interiorly, and it shall be a mark to thee that thou hast it, if thou hast exteriorly a love for thy neighbor. For thou lovest God not, unless thou findest that thy heart loves thy neighbor; as it is written: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" (1 John 4:20).

Upon love depends all of God's commandments and both the Old and New Testaments —that thou shalt love God, and shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt have common joy with him in his good fortune, common sorrow with him in his ill fortune, "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) with him,

as was the case among the whole multitude of the faithful in the time of the apostles, when all things were in common. And if thou canst not exhibit this community of feeling outwardly from lack of means, thou must yet cherish it in thy deepest soul, very unfeignedly, not half-heartedly, very intelligently—"in all understanding"—and with a ready good will to do what lies within thy power. And when thou canst do no more for thy neighbor, thou canst at least say a kindly or a gentle word to him out of a full heart.

And thy love must extend even to a perverse neighbor. Thou must lovingly and patiently suffer his wickedness. Do not fall upon him with hard words, but mercifully bear his defects. Remember that often enough men are not bad from rooted and habitual malice, but from unwariness, or from dullness of mind; or, as St. Gregory tells us, from God's allowing them to fall into sinfulness so that they may be deeply humiliated and thereby learn their own guilty weakness. As to those who are not habitual but only occasional sinners, these thou mayest easily and quickly lead to consider their sad state, to acknowledge their wickedness, and to do penance. The others obstinately cling to their vices, and even justify themselves. But all of them must thou bear with affectionately, and

thereby prove the sincerity of thy love. If thou quickly sittest in judgment on thy sinful neighbor, that is a true sign that the love of God has withered up in thy soul: and some are as hasty in judging others as a man in leaping a stone wall. Be on thy guard against rash judgment; if things look bad, cover thy face with thy mantle, and blind thy eyes to the faults of others. Examine thyself very closely, and hold court over thy own shortcomings. Everything is going wrong, children, because no one will bear patiently with his neighbor's faults for love's sake, and because no one will pity his neighbor's weakness, little considering how much of evil in men is due to feebleness of character, lack of good sense, or momentary unguardedness.

Thus must our brotherly love "more and more abound," and must be directed to all mankind as practically as lies in our power. And hereby shall we discover the genuineness of the love that is turned inward toward God, the source and origin of our being. The knowledge and understanding in love mentioned by the apostle is found in the orderly relation between these two loves, the inward and the outward; for the interior love is pregnant of the exterior love, which is continually being born of it: this is the kinship between the two.

When a man wishes to love God, he looks inward, and then he finds that he has a loveless and a graceless heart toward God. But he knows he must love God with all his heart: therefore he rises up in fierce condemnation of himself and he loudly laments his depravity. He in spirit sinks himself deep into hell, or at least into a terrific purgatory; and every conceivable misfortune seems to him to be due to him; and as a matter of fact, God sometimes sends much adversity upon him. Now in very truth this is all just; a man must indeed launch this condemnation against himself. But what shall we do, we poor little worms, crawling about in the dust of the earth? As soon as we feel this deep humiliation, let us say this: O merciful God, have pity on me; save me and help me; inflict such and such judgments on me, so that in spite of all the fires of purgatory I may at last attain to the kingdom of heaven. Well we know that without some purgatory few saints have entered heaven, and yet if one should pray thus to be favored, I do not condemn him for it. But I say that he who has true love for God will, while he judges himself harshly and knows full well his own defects, yet lovingly sink down into the abyss of God's being; he will give himself up entirely to God's good pleasure, and

this act he will accompany with a perfect abdication of all will of his own.

Love of God, when it is true, causes total self-renunciation and the giving up of all self-will. Thus prepared, let a man fall at God's feet and beg him to sit in judgment of him in love, so that God's holiness may be given him, and God's will be done in him and in all creatures, according to his eternal decrees, whether it may condemn him to purgatory or not—how soon, how long, how bitter: Lord, let all be ordered according to thy will; be I much or little in thy sight, near to thee or far away, let all be done to me as thou willest. Thus must thou be glad that God's holiness shall be vindicated upon thy littleness; and if thou seest a holy man treated differently from thee, and God's majesty is shown by this one's virtue, rejoice in his good fortune as if it were thine own. Children, this is indeed true love.

O, if one has committed all the sins in the world, and now coming to the end of his life is granted such a conversion, and has thus given himself up to God's will absolutely and in perfect love, he will go straight to heaven. But no man can bestow this grace in thee, for it is God's gift alone. And as there can be no better death than one blest with this love, so there can be no more blessed life than

one spent in such love, always more and more abounding in it, the lover finally absorbed in the Beloved.

But sins and temptations stand opposed to this love. As to temptations, these are, taken in themselves, not sinful, being only incidental to our fallen nature's evil tendencies. We must not desire them, nor induce them. But as to the pain they bring in resisting them, that we should welcome, lovingly placing our shoulders under this heavy burden. Would God have thee fight temptations till the day of judgment? Make up thy mind to do so gladly—do it out of love of suffering, and to the praise and honor of God. Everything that one is thus called on to suffer, let him accept it as from God. And if the merit of it be given not to thyself but rather to some poor Jew or heathen whom thou hast never seen, given him for his soul's salvation, then shouldst thou thank God for it most sincerely, and be glad of it as if it were all bestowed on thyself.

Another enjoyment of love is the sensible presence of the beloved and the sweetness of devotion overflowing the heart. But suppose a man had all of that joy in every possible fulness he could desire, and that it was now revealed to him that God would empty his soul of it all, and give it to his deadliest

enemy, what then? He must be glad of it, and give it over with his heart's best love. Once I heard a great friend of God say this: "I can not do otherwise; I am under constraint more heartily to wish my neighbor to go to heaven than myself." And that is what I call love.

And there are many other objects of a loving heart's desire. One would be glad of the gift of divine peace; he would be glad of a state of life poorer than any orphan in the whole world. But I say to thee, leave on one side thy own plans and devices; let love do thy planning, and do thou simply go out to thyself and all that is thine in loving abandonment to thy Beloved, resting in humility and detachment of spirit.

One must have love abounding "more and more in knowledge, and in all understanding"; and that does not mean simply a good way or degree of loving, but the very best. In knowledge indeed: for the prince of this world has everywhere planted weeds among the roses, so that the weeds often choke the roses to death, or at least greatly stunt their growth. One must get away from dangerous company; separations are inevitable, whether we speak of persons in communities or those who remain outside. And this does not mean that God's friends should become little sects

among ordinary people in the world, and separated from them. No; but they should be only separated from others by their love of God and their virtuous lives.

The love so far treated of is the lower powers of the soul, and by it nature is granted the enjoyment of many sweet spiritual morsels and many drinks of the wine of Cyprus. Such was the privilege of the disciples, while our Lord was personally present with them. But at last he said: "It is expedient to you that I go" (John 16:7). That is to say: If you would enjoy me in the noblest manner, then you must give me up. For be assured, children, that this love in abandonment is as much higher than the other as heaven is higher than earth. And unto this love the apostles were now introduced. O how much happier is the lot of those who are granted this love. Love like this consists only in denying, not at all in agreeing; it is not possessing God in the way the apostles had possest him in their Master's presence, but possessing him in the want of him.

This is a kind of not knowing that is a superessential knowledge, lifted far above reasoning—superessential and super-wise. But when this process of elevating love is going forward, the soul that endures it struggles like an infant being weaned; cowardly nature,

flying from God's face into the hidden corners of the soul is all forlorn and supremely disturbed. For nature is wholly unequal to this trial. To such desolation is the soul reduced that it dare not look at itself, it seems to itself to have ceased to think, ceased to desire. Nor is the soul able to offer this agony to God—so at least it feels—and it can but cling to a state of apparently absolute unknowingness. And yet that soul loves; it renounces self for love; it dies to all objects of love that it had in those introductory steps we have already considered, assuming in this obscurity a higher love. In very truth, it is God who is now at work in the soul; it is he who loves himself there, and is the only object of love. As to the soul, there is now nothing for it but self-renunciation and enduring that process of new formation which is taking place in the divine obscurity, as we find it described in St. Dionysius. Poor human nature is now led in a very different way from the former one; it is the way of perfect denudation of self.

And this is not only in the interior life, but it extends to outward things also—all support, all consolation is withdrawn. Even the sacraments are often directly refused to such a soul, or they are somehow withheld, and this is done by God's own ordering. Before this visitation I would have given such a one

holy communion every day—and at present would by no means do so, for God wills otherwise. The soul must now tread another path, leading upward in deep darkness. That spirit must rest in God's Spirit in a hidden stillness as if absorbed in God.

Light at last shines in that darkness, but it is seen only when the soul finds itself in complete single-minded resignation of self to God. And in that state, all multiplicity is unified. This is the day of Jesus Christ spoken of by St. Paul. Now for the first time is Christ rightly received with all the fruits of his passion and death. It is his day, bright and clear in all purification. Not that there is to him any increase of the fruits of his passion and death; but in us the gain is wonderfully great, because we have him in this high and noble state of holiness in a way far above forms and images of the mind; in a hidden way, most interior and most divine.

And our Lord offers an instructive illustration of this state. Before his death he allowed himself to be touched by Mary Magdalene, his feet washed, his head anointed. Not so after his death: "Jesus saith to her: do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Thus in the lower spiritual state, he allows himself to be touched, washed, anointed by the soul he loves,

to that soul's intense joy. But in the higher spiritual degree it is not so: he is now known to the soul only as he is in the bosom of his Father—he is ascended, he has disappeared with all that he is. This is what the soul finds in Christ—true day.

This was foreshown in the generation of the Son by the Father in the divine life, and the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son in ever fruitful love. This is indeed the true day, in which true love is born in its proper way and fitting nobility of birth, all in Jesus Christ; as St. Gregory has described it. On this state a great teacher of our order thus speaks: "The light of Jesus Christ shines in our interior soul clearer than the sun in the heavens, and his light is from the interior outward, and not from the exterior inward." Children, there is herein experienced a wonderful increase of holiness, passing all calculation. It goes on not day by day, but every hour and every instant. But one in this state must watch himself very carefully, and he must labor diligently to stand his ground. That we shall do so all of us who are true friends of God earnestly hope, namely, that we "may more and more abound" in holy love. May God, who is true love, help us to all this. AMEN.

SELECTIONS FROM THE

Revelations of Divine Love Shewed to Mother Juliana of Norwich

1373

JULIANA OF NORWICH

English mystic, author of "Revelations of Divine Love"; born near Norwich in 1342; said to have been "yet in life" in 1442. She became a recluse in an anchorage attached to the Church of St. Julian of Norwich. In the first chapter of her "Revelations" she says: "This is a revelation of love, that Jesu Christ our endless blisse made in xvi. shewings." In the second chapter she says: "This revelation was made to a simple creature unlettered, living in deadlie flesh, the year of our Lord, a thousand three hundreth lxxiij, the xiiijth daie of Maie: which creature desired before three gifts by the grace of God. 'The first was mind of the passion.' 'The second was bodilie sickness.' 'The third was to have of God's gift three woundes, . . . that is to say, the wound of verie contrition, the wound of kind compassion, and the wound of willful longing to God' "

The book is a record of twenty years' meditation on these experiences. More than fifteen years later she received "in ghostly understanding" the key to the interpretation of her religious experiences: "What? wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Wit it well: Love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth he it thee? For love. Hold thee therein, thou shalt wit more in the same. But thou shalt never wit therein other without end."

Preface

[The first five chapters sum up the contents of the "Sixteen Revelations," give the circumstances (severe illness) and time (1373) in which they were received, indicate that they were mediated through the sight of the crucifix held before her during and after the administration of the Church's last rites, and describe the vision—of blood streaming from the wounds caused by the crown of thorns (later from the other wounds) of the figure on the cross, out of which the "Revelations" flowed.]

In Mother Juliana's "Revelations of Divine Love," we see love in its double capacity as the revealed and the revealer: "Love was his meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love." Nurtured in the rich soil of medieval Christianity, she found in the Catholic dogma of God incarnate and crucified for love of his sinful creatures a conception of the nature and relations of the spiritual world whose fertility is simply inexhaustible, comparable in some sort to those master-hypotheses of science which receive overwhelming confirmation day by day, through their success in coordinating previously irreconcilable tracts of experience into a harmonious unity. We can trace in these "shewings" the development of the love which was awakened in her own heart in response to that call from outside, by which the

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Church, as Christ's herald, arouses men's souls from slumber: "Awake! thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee." Once started, the process works its way, light kindling love, and love thus kindled, seeking further light that it may burn yet more fiercely. The nearer she is brought to the centre of the world of spiritual realities and subjected to the influences and attractions that radiate from and converge to that point; the nearer, in other words, she comes to him in whom all spirits live and move, from whom they proceed, to whom they return, so much the more imperatively does the affection, thus kindled to new ardours, seek to understand and explain itself by fuller ideas and images of the felt but unseen realities; and also the more faithfully do these representations, created, selected, or adapted under the inspiration of love, correspond practically to the truth of the spiritual world. Hence Love is the teacher, and love is the thing taught—in both cases, Love as incarnate in Christ crucified, the revealer and the revealed; known, and therefore better loved; loved, and therefore better known. In hers, as in the case of many saints and mystics, the process, viewed on its psychological side, seems to have been accelerated and intensified, and lifted into the plane of the preternatural,

or, at least, of the abnormal. Like other acute and all-absorbing states of sensibility, divine love, when it seizes hold of the emotions, seems to bring together an independent system of images, memories and reasonings, and thus to create a sort of secondary personality, outside the normal, whose utterances are not all untruly regarded by the latter as proceeding from an external source. But the particular process by which love in its intensified form seeks self-utterance is of little moment compared with the meaning and end of that utterance.

[From a Preface by George Tyrell. It will be noted that in the text the spelling and wording of the original has been retained so as to preserve in greater measure the flavor and meaning.]

Chapter Six

This shewing[1] was given to my understanding, to learne[1a] our soul wisely to cleave to the goodnes of God, and in that same time the custome of our praier was brought to my mind, how that we use, for unknowing of love, to make many meanes. Then sawe I verilie that it is more worship to God, and more verie delight that we faithfullie pray to himself of his goodnes, and cleave thereto by his grace

[1] Revelation or vision.
[1a] "Learn" is used throughout in the sense of "teach."

with true understanding and stedfast beleif, then if we made all the meanes that heart may think.

For if we make all these meanes, it is too litle, and not full worship to God; but in his goodnes is all the whole; and there faileth right nought.

For thus as I shall saie, came to my minde in the same time: we pray to God for his holie flesh, and for his precious blood, his holie passion, his deare worthie death, and worshipfull wounds; for all the blessed kindenes and the endles life that we have of all this, it is of the goodnes of God. And we praie him for his sweet mothers love that bare him; and all the helpe that we have of her it is of his goodnes. And we praie for his holie crosse, that he died on; and all the helpe, and all the vertue of that we have of that crosse, it is of his goodnes.

And on the same wise, all the helpe that we have to special saints, and of all the blessed companie of heaven; the deare worthie love, and the holy endles friendship that we have of them, it is of his goodnes.

For the meanes that the goodnes of God hath ordeined for to helpe us be full faire and many.

Of which the chiefe and principall meane is the blessed kinde that he took of the maiden,

with all the meanes that went before, and come after, which be longing to our redemption and to our endless salvation.

Wherefore it pleaseth him that we seeke him and worship him by meanes; understanding and knowing that he is the goodnes of all.

For to the goodnes of God is the highest praier, and it cometh down to us to the lowest partie of our neede; it quickneth our soule, and maketh it live, and makes it to waxe in grace and vertue; it is nearest in kind and readiest in grace.

For it is the same grace that the soule seeketh, and ever shall till we know our God verilie that hath us all in himself beclosed.

A man goeth upright, and the soule of his body is sparred[2] as a purse full faire, and when it is time of his necessity, it is opened and sparred againe full honestlie.

And that it is he that doth this, it is shewed there where he saith, "He cometh downe to us to the lowest part of our need." For he hath no despite of that he made, ne[2a] hath he no disdaine to serve us at the simplest office that to our bodie longeth in kind, for love of the soule that he made to his own likenes.

For as the bodie is cladd in the cloath, and the flesh in the skinn, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the bulke,[3] so are we

[2] Fastened, closed. [2a] Nor. [3] Body.

soule and bodie cladd and enclosed in the goodnes of God: yea, and more homelie, for all they vanish and wast away, the goodnes of God is ever whole and more nere to us without any comparison.

For truelie our Lover desireth that the soule cleave to him with all the mightes, and that we be evermore cleaving to his goodnes: for of all thing that heart can thinke it pleaseth most God, and soonest speedeth.

For our soule is so preciouslie loved of him that is highest, that it over-passeth the knowing of all creatures:

That is to saie, there is no creature that is made that may wit how much, and how sweetly, and how tenderlie that our Maker loveth us. And therefore we may with his grace and his helpe stand in ghostlie[4] beholding with everlasting marvailing in this high over-passing unmeasurable love that our Lord hath to us of his goodnes.

And therefore, we may aske of our Lover with reverence all that we will: for our kindlie will is to have God, and the goodwill of God is to have us: and we may never cease of willing, ne of loving, till we have him in fulhead[4a] of joy.

And then we may no more will; for he will

[4] Spiritual.
[4a] Fulness—so often in the "Revelations."

that we be occupied in knowing and loving, till the time cometh that we shall be fulfilled in heaven.

And therefore was this lesson of love shewed with all that followeth as you shall see; for the strength and the ground of all was shewed in the first sight: for, of all things, the beholding and the loving of the Maker maketh the soul to seem least in his own sight, and most filleth it with reverent dread and true meekness, and with plenty of charity to his even Christian.[5]

Chapter Eleven

And after this, I saw God in a point,[5a] that is to say, in my understanding: by which sight I saw that he is in all thing. I beheld with advisement, seeing and knowing in that sight, that he doth all that is done. I marvelled in that sight with a soft dread, and thought: what is sin? For I saw truly, that God doth all thing, be it never so litle. And I saw verily, that nothing is done by happ, ne by adventure, but all by the aforesaid wisdom of God; if it be happ or adventure in the sight of man, our blind-head[6] and un-fore-sight is the cause. For those things that be in the

[5] "Even Christian"=fellow Christians.
[5a] That is, "precisely," constantly used in this sense.
[6] Blindness.

foresaid wisdom of God been fro without beginning,[7] which rightfully and worshipfully continually he leadeth to the best end: as it cometh about, falling to us suddenly, our unwitting. And thus by our blindness and our unforesight we say these things be by happs and adventure.

Thus I understand in this shewing of love: for well I wot, in the sight of our Lord God is no happ ne adventure. Wherefore me behoved[8] needs to grant that all things that are done are well done; for our Lord God doth all: for in this time the working of creatures was not shewed, but of our Lord God in the creatures; for he is in the mid point of all things; and all, he doth. And I am sure that he doth no sin.

And here I saw verily that sin is no deed; for in all this, sin was not shewed. And I would no longer marvel in this, but beheld our Lord what he would shew.

And thus as it might be for the time, the rightfulness of God's work was shewed for the soul.

Rightfulness hath two fair properties. It is right, and it is full: and so be all the works of our Lord. And thereto needeth neither working of mercy ne grace: for they

[7] *I.e.*, are eternal as fixed in God's mind.
[8] "Me beloved"="I must."

be all rightful, wherein faileth right nought. And in an other time, he shewed for beholding of sin naked, as I shall say; after when he useth working of mercy and of grace. This vision was shewed to my understanding; for our Lord will have the soul turned truly unto the beholding of him, and generally of all his works, for they be full good. And all his dooms[9] be easie and sweet, and two great eyes bringing the soul that is turned from the beholding of the blind deeming[10] of man into the faire sweet deeming of our Lord God. For man, he holdeth some deeds well done, and some deeds evil: and our Lord beholdeth them not so, for as all that hath being in kind is of God's making, so is all thing that is done in property of God's doing. For it is easie to understand that the best deed is well done; and so well as the best deed that is done, and the highest, so well is the least deed done: and all in the property and in the order that our Lord hath it ordeined to, fro without beginning. For there is no Door [Doer] but he.

I saw full truly that he changed never his purpose in no manner of thing, ne never shall without end: for there was nothing unknown to him in his rightful ordinance, fro without beginning. And therefore all thing were set in order ere anything was made, as it should

[9] Decrees. [10] Judgment.

stand without end; and no manner of thing shall fail of that point; for he hath made all thing in fulhead[10a] of goodnes.

And therefore the blessed Trinity is ever full pleased in all his works. And all this shewed he full blessedly, meaning thus, "See I am God: See I am in all things: See I do all things: See I never left my hands of my works, ne never shall without end: See I lead all thing to the end that I ordaine it to, fro without beginning, by the same might, wisdom, and love that I made it with. How should anything be amiss?" Thus mightily, wisely, and lovingly was the soul examined in this vision. Then saw I verily that me behoveth[11] needs to assent with great reverence and joy in God.

Chapter Fourteen

And after this our Lord said, "I thank thee of thy service, and of thy travel of thy youth." And in this my understanding was lift up into heaven, where I saw our Lord God as a lord in his own house, which lord hath called all his dear worthy friends to a solemn feast. Then I saw the Lord taking no place in his own house; but I saw him royally reign

[10a] Fulness. [11] "Me behoveth"="I must."

in his house, and all fulfilleth it with joy and mirth, endlesly to glad and solace his dear worthy friends, full homely and full curteously with marvelous melody in endless love, in his own fair blessedful cheer: which glorious cheer of the Godhead fulfilleth all heaven of joy and bliss. God shewed three degrees of bliss that each soul shall have in heaven, that willingfully hath served God in any degree in earth. The first is, the worship and thanks that he shall receive of our Lord God when he is delivered of paine: this thanks is so high and so worshipful, that him thinketh that it filleth him, though there were no more; for methought all the pain and travel that might be suffered of all living men might not have deserved the worshipful thank that one man shall have that wilfully hath served God. For the second, that all the blessed creatures that be in heaven shall see the worshipful thanking; and he maketh his service known to all that be in heaven. And in this time this example was shewed: a king, if he thank his subjects, it is a great worship to them, and if he make it known to all the realm, then their worship is much encreased. And for the third, that as new and as liking[12] as it is undertaken that time, right so shall it last without end. And I saw that homely and

[12] Pleasantly, agreeably.

sweetly was this shewed, that the age of every man shall be known in heaven, and be rewarded for his wilful[13] service and for his time; and namely[14] the age of them that wilfully[15] and freely offer their youth to God, passingly[16] is rewarded and wonderfully thanked; for I saw that when or what time that a man or woman be truly turned to God, for one dayes service and for his endless will, he shall have all these three degrees of bliss. And the more that the loving soul seeth this courtesie of God, the levir[17] she is to serve him all her life.

Chapter Twenty

And thus saw I our Lord Jesu languring[18] long time; for the uning[19] of the God-head gave strength to the man-head[19a] for love to suffer more than all men might; I mean not only more pain than all men might suffer, but also that he suffered more pain than all men of salvation that ever was from the first beginning into the last day might tell or fully think—having regard to the worthiness of the highest worshipful King, and the

[13] Willing.
[14] Especially.
[15] Willingly.
[16] Supremely.
[17] More willing.
[18] Suffering.
[19] Uniting [of Deity and humanity].
[19a] Humanity.

shameful and despiteous painful death. For he that is highest and worthiest was foulest condemned and utterly despised: for his passion is to think and to know that he is God that suffered; seeing after these other two points which be lower—that one is what he suffered, and that other, for whom that he suffered. And in this he brought to mind in part the height and the nobility of the glorious God-head, and therewith the precious-head[20] and the tenderness of the blessedful body which be together oned,[21] and also the loathfulness that in our kind[21a] is to suffer pain; for asmuch as he was most tender and clean, right, so he was most strong and mighty to suffer: and for every mans sin that shall be saved he suffered; and every mans sorrow, dissolation, and anguish he saw and sorrowed for kindness and love; for in as much as our Lady[22] sorrowed for his pains, as much suffered he sorrow for her sorrows; and, moreover, in as much as the sweet man-head[23] of him was worthier in kind; for as long as he was passible,[24] he suffered for us and sorrowed for us. And now he is up-risen, and no more passible; yet he suffered with us, as I shall

[20] Preciousness.
[21] United [with the divine Spirit].
[21a] Nature.
[22] Mary, the mother of Jesus.
[23] Humanity.
[24] Susceptible of suffering.

say after. And I beholding all this by his grace, saw that the love in him was so strong, which he hath to our soul, that willingfully he chose it with great desire; and mildly he suffered it with great joy; for the soul that he beholdeth thus, when it is touched by grace, he shall verily see that the pains of Christs passion pass all pains; that is to say, which pains shall be turned into everlasting joy by the vertue of Christs passion.

Chapter Thirty-two

One time our good Lord said, "All manner of thing shall be well"; and another time he said, "Thou shalt see thyself that all manner of thing shall be well." And in these two the soul took sundry manner of understanding. One was this; that he will, we wit that not only he taketh heed to noble things and to great, but also to litle and to small, to low and to simple, and to one and to other. And so meaneth he in that he saith, "All manner of thing shall be well"; for he will that we wit that the least thing shall not be forgotten. Another understanding is this; that there be many deeds evil done in our sight, and so great harms take[24a] that it seemeth to us that

[24a] Seen, result.

it were impossible that ever it should come to a good end. And upon this we look, sorrow, and mourn therefore; so that we cannot rest us in the blissedful beholding of God as we should do. And the cause is this; that the use of our reason is now so blind, so low, and so simple that we cannot know the high marvellous wisdom, the might and the goodnes, of the blissedful Trinity. And this meaneth he where he saith, "Thou shalt see, thyself, that all manner of thing shall be well." As if he said, take now faithfully and trustfully, and at the last end thou shalt be verily in fulhead[25] of joy. And thus in the same five words beforesaid, "I may make all thing well," I understand a mighty comfort of all works of our Lord God that are for to come. There is a deed the which the blissedful Trinity shall do in the last day, as to my sight:[25a] and what the deed shall be, and how it shall be done, it is unknown to all creatures which are beneath Christ, and shall be till when it shall be done. The goodness and the love of our Lord God will, that we wit that it shall be: and the might and the wisdom of him by the same love will hill[26] it and hide it from us, what it shall be and

[25] Fulness.
[25a] As I see it—a frequent mannerism of this author.
[26] Conceal.

how it shall be done. And the cause why he will we wit it thus is, for he will we be the more eased in our soul, and peaceable in love, leaving the beholding of all tempests that might let[27] us of true enjoying in him. This is the great deed ordeined of our Lord God fro without beginning, treasured and hid in his blessed breast, only known to himself; by which deed he shall make all thing well, for right as the blessed Trinity made all thing of naught, right so the same blessed Trinity shall make well all that is not well. And in this sight I marvelled greatly, and beheld our faith, meaning thus: Our faith is grounded in Gods word, and it longeth[28] to our faith that we believe that Gods word shall be saved in all thing: and one point of our faith is, that many creatures shall be damned, as angels that fell out of heaven for pride, which be now fiends; and many in earth that dyeth out of the faith of Holy Church; that is to say, those that be heathen: and also many that hath received Christendome, and liveth unchristen life, and so dyeth out of charity; all these shall be damned to hell without end, as Holy Church teacheth me to believe: and standing all this, methought it was unpossible that all manner of thing should be well, as our Lord shewed in this time. And

[27] Hinder. [28] Belongeth.

as to this, I had no other answer in shewing of our Lord but this; "That, that is unpossible to thee, is not unpossible to mee; I shall save my word in all thing, and I shall make all thing well." And in this I was taught by the grace of God that I should stedfastly hold me in the faith as I had before understood. And therewith, that I should stand and sadly believe that all manner thing shall be well, as our Lord shewed in the same time; for this is the great deed that our Lord God shall do: in which deed he shall save his word in all thing; and he shall make well all that is not well. But what the deed shall be, and how it shall be done, there is no creature beneath Christ that wot it, ne shall wit it till it is done, as to the understanding that I took of our Lords meaning in this time.

Chapter Thirty-six

Our Lord God shewed that a deed shall be done, and himself shall do it; and it shall be worshipful and marvellous, and plentuous, and by him it shall be done, and himself shall do it. And this is the highest joy that the soul understood, that God himself shall do it. And I shall do right nought but sin, and

my sin shall not let[29] his goodnes working. And I saw that the beholding of this is a heavenly joy in a dreadful [30] soul, which evermore kindly by grace desireth Gods will. This deed shall be begun here, and it shall be worshipful to God, and plentuously profitable to all his lovers in earth. And ever as we come to heaven, we shall see it in marvellous joy. And it shall last thus in working to the last day; and the worship and the bliss of that shall last in heaven before God, and all his holy saints without end. Thus was this deed seen and understand in our Lords meaning; and the cause why he shewed it is to make us to enjoy[31] in him and in all his works.

When I saw the shewing continued, I understood it was shewed for a great thing that was then for to come: which thing God shewed that himself should do it. Which deed hath the properties before said. And this shewed he full blessedfully, meaning that I should take it wistly, faithfully, and trustfully; but what the deed should be it was kept privy to me. And in this I saw, he will not we dread to know the things that he sheweth; he sheweth them, for he will we know them. By which knowing he will we

[29] Hinder, prevent.

[30] Fearful, timid.

[31] Take pleasure, rejoice.

love him, and like in him, and endlesly enjoy in him. And for the great love that he hath to us, he sheweth us all that is worshipful and profitable for the time; and those things that he will now have privy; yet of his great goodnes he shewed them close. In which shewing he will we believe, and understand, that we should see it verily in his endless bliss. Then ought we to enjoy in him for all that he sheweth, and all that he hideth. And if we wilfully and meekly do this, we shall find therein great ease, and endless thanking we shall have of him therefore. And this is the understanding of this word, "That it shall be done by me" (that is to say, [as to] the general man; that is to say, all that shall be safe); it shall be worshipful, marvellous, and plentuous; and "By me it shall be done, and God himself shall do it." And this shall be highest joy that may be beholden of the deed, that God himself shall do it, and man shall do right nought but sin. Then meaneth our Lord God thus, as if he said: "Behold and see, here hast thou matter of meekness; here hast thou matter of love; here hast thou matter of knowing thyself; here hast thou matter of enjoying in me; and for my love enjoy[32] in me, for, of all thing, therewith might thou most please mee." And

[32] Take pleasure, rejoice.

as long as we be in this life, what time that we by our folly turn us to the beholding of the reproved, tenderly our Lord toucheth us, and blissedfully calleth us, saying in our soul "Let me alone, my dear worthy child; intend[33] to me, I am enough to thee, and enjoy[33a] in thy Saviour and in thy salvation." And that this is our Lords working in us, I am sure the soul that is pearced therewith by grace shall see it and feel it; and though it be so that this deed be truly take for the general man, yet it excludeth not the special;[34] for what our good Lord will do by his poor creatures, it is now unknown to me. But this deed, and that other aforesaid, it is not both one, but two sundry; but this deed shall be known sooner, and that shall be as we come to heaven. And to whom our Lord giveth it, it may be known here in party.[34a] But the great deed aforesaid shall neither be known in heaven nor in earth till that it be done. And furthermore, he gave special understanding and teaching of working, and shewing of miracles as this; "It is known that I have done miracles here before many, and full high and marvellous,

[33] Have regard.
[33a] Rejoice (so frequently used).
[34] That is—the saying was general in its purpose, but applicable to individuals.
[34a] Part—always thus employed.

worshipful and great; and so as I have done, I do now continually, and shall in coming of time. It is known that before miracles come sorrows, and anguish, and trouble." And that is, that we should know our own feebleness and mischief, that we be fallen in by sin, to meek us,[35] and make us to cry to God for help and grace; and great miracles come after, and that, of the high might and wisdom and goodnes of God, shewing his vertue and the joyes of heaven, so as it may be in this passing life; and that for the strengthening of our faith and encrease of our hope in charity. Wherefore it pleaseth him to be known and worshipped in miracles. Then meaneth he thus, he will that we be not born over-low for sorrows and tempests that fall to us, for it hath ever so been before miracles comming.

Chapter Thirty-nine

Sin is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul may be smitten with. Which scourge all-to[36] beateth man or woman, and all-to breaketh him, and purgeth him in his own sight, so far forth that otherwhile he thinketh himself that he is not worthy but as it were to sink into hell, till when contrition taketh

[35] Make us meek. [36] Completely, severely.

him by touching of the Holy Ghost, and turneth the bitterness into hope of Gods mercy. And then begin his wounds to heal, and the soul to quicken, turned into the life of Holy Church. The Holy Ghost leadeth him to confession, wilfully[37] to shew his sins nakedly and truly with great sorrow and with great shame, that he hath so defouled the fair image of God. Then undertaketh he penance for every sin enjoyned by his domes-man,[38] that is grounded in Holy Church by the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

And this is one meekness that greatly pleaseth God, and also meekly taketh bodily sickness of God's sending; also sorrow and shame outwardly, with reproof and despite of the world, with all manner of grievance and temptations that we be cast in, ghostly and bodily: full preciously our good Lord keepeth us, when it seemeth to us that we be near forsaken and cast away for our sin, and for[39] we see that we have deserved it. And because of the meekness that we get thereby, we be raised full high in God's sight by his grace. And also whom our Lord will, he visiteth of his special grace with so great contrition, and also with compassion and true

[37] Of set purpose, determined.

[38] Confessor.

[39] "And for"="because," "inasmuch as."

longing to God, that they be suddenly delivered of sin and of pain, and taken up to bliss, and made even with saints. By contrition we be made clean, by compassion we be made ready, and by true longing to God we be made worthy.

These be three means, as I understood, whereby that all souls come to heaven; that is to say, that have been sinners in earth, and shall be saved: for by these medicines behoveth that every sinful soul be healed; though [after] that he be healed, his wounds be seen before God not as wounds but as worships. And so on the contrariwise, as we be punished here with sorrow and with penance, we shall be rewarded in heaven by the courteous love of our God Almighty, that will that none that come there leese[40] his travel in any degree: for he beholdeth sin as sorrow and pains to his lovers, in whom he assigneth no blame for love. The meed that we undertake [receive] shall not be litle, but it shall be high, glorious, and worshipful; and so shall all shame turn to worship and to joy. For our courteous Lord will not that his servants despair for oft failing, ne for grievous falling; for our falling letteth not him to love us; peace and love is ever in us, being and working; but we be not ever in peace and

[40] Lose

in love. But he will we take heed thus, that he is ground of all our whole life in love; and furthermore, that he is our everlasting Keeper, and mightily defendeth us against all our enemies that be full fell[41] and full fierce upon us. And so much our need is the more, for we give them occasion by our falling.

Chapter Forty

And this is a sovereign friendship of our courteous Lord, that he keepeth us so tenderly whiles we be in our sin: and furthermore, he toucheth us full privily, and sheweth us our sin by the sweet light of mercy and grace. But when we see ourselves so foul then we wene[42] that God were wrath with us for our sin; then be we stirred of the Holy Ghost by contrition into prayer and desire, amending of ourself with all our might, to slack the wrath of God, unto the time we find a rest in soul and softness in conscience. And then hope we that God hath forgiven us our sin, and it is true. And then sheweth our courteous Lord himself to the soul merrily, and of full glad chear, with friendfully welcoming as if it had been in pain and in prison, saying thus: "My dear darling, I am

[41] Fierce, bitter. [42] Suppose.

glad thou art come to me in all thy woe; I have ever been with thee, and now seest thou me loving, and we be oned in bliss." Thus are sins forgiven by grace and mercy, and our soul worshipfully received in joy; like as it shall be when it cometh into heaven, as oftimes as it cometh by the gracious working of the Holy Ghost, and the vertue of Christs passion. Here understood I verily, that all manner of thing is made ready to us by the great goodnes of God; so far forth that, what time we be our self in peace and in charity, we be verily safe. But for we may not have this in fulhead while we be here, therefore it befalleth us ever to live in sweet praying and in lovely longing with our Lord Jesu, for he longeth ever for to bring us to the fulhead of joy, as it is before said; where he sheweth the ghostly thirst.

But now because of all this ghostly comfort that is before said; if any man or woman be stirred by folly, to say or to think; "If this be true, then were it good for to sin, to have the more meed, or else to charge the less to sin"; beware of this stirring, for truly if it come, it is untrue and of the enemy; for the same true love that toucheth us all by his blessed comfort, the same blessed love teacheth us that we shall hate sin only for love. And I am sure by my own feeling, the more

that each kind soul seeth this in the courteous love of our Lord God, the lother[43] is him to sin and the more he is ashamed: for if it were laid before us all the pain that is in hell, and in purgatory, and in earth, to suffer it rather than sin, we should rather choose all that pain than sin: for sin is so vile, and so mickle for to hate,[44] that it may be likned to no pain; which pain is not sin. And to me was shewed none harder hell than sin; for a kind soul hateth no pain but sin, for all is good but sin, and naught is evil but sin. And when we give our intent to love and meekness, by the working of mercy and grace we be made all fair and clean.

And as mighty and as wise as God is to save man, as willing he is. For Christ himself is ground of all the laws of Christen men; and he taught us to doe good against evil. Here we may see that he is himself this charity, and doth to us as he teacheth us to do: for he will that we be like him in wholehead[45] of endless love to our self, and to our even Christen.[46] No more than his love is broken to us for our sin, no more will he that our love be broken to our self, nor to our even Christen, but nakedly hate sin, and endlesly love the soul, as God loveth it. Then should

[43] More averse.
[44] So much to be hated.
[45] Wholeness, entirety.
[46] Fellow Christians.

we hate sin like as God hateth it, and love the soul as God loveth it; for these words that God said, is an endless comfort, "I keep thee full truly."

Chapter Forty-One

After this our Lord shewed for prayer: in which shewing I saw two conditions in our Lords meaning. One is rightful prayer. Another is siker[47] trust. But yet oftentimes our trust is not full; for we be not sure that God heareth us, as we think for[48] our unworthiness, and for we feel right naught; for we be as barren and as dry ofttimes after our prayers as we were before. And thus, in our feeling, our folly is cause of our weakness; for thus have I felt by my self. And all this brought our Lord suddenly to my mind, and shewed these words, and said, "I am ground of thy beseeking. First, it is my will that thou have it: and sithen[49] I make thee to will it, and sithen I make thee to beseek it, and thou seekest it, how should it then be, that thou shouldest not have thy seeking?" And thus in the first reason, with the three that follow, our good Lord sheweth a mighty comfort, as it may be seen in the same words.

[47] Secure. [48] Because of. [49] Since.

And in the first reason, there he saith; "And thou beseek it," there he sheweth full great pleasance and endless meed, that he will give us for our beseeking. And in the sixth reason, there he saith, "How should it then be?" this was said for an unpossible thing; for it is the most unpossible that may, that we should seek mercy and grace and not have it. For of all thing that our good Lord maketh us to beseek himself, he hath ordained it to us from without beginning. Here may we then see, that our beseeking is not the cause of the goodness and grace that he doth to us, but his proper[49a] goodnes. And that shewed he verily in all these sweet words, there he saith, "I am ground." And our good Lord will that this be known of his lovers in earth; and the more that we know, the more shall we beseech, if it be wisely take;[50] and so is our Lords meaning. Beseeching is a true and gracious lasting will of the soul, owned and fastened into the will of our Lord, by the sweet privy working of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord himself he is the first receiver of our prayer, as to my sight, and he taketh it full thankfully; and highly enjoying, he sendeth it up above, and setteth it in treasure, where it shall never perish: it is there before God, with all his holy saints continually received,

[49a] Personal, own. [50] Done, seen, perceived.

ever speeding our needs. And when we shall undertake [receive] our bliss, it shall be given us for a degree of joy, with endless worshipful thanking of him; full glad and merry is our Lord of our prayer: and he looketh thereafter, and he will have it; for with his grace it maketh us like to himself in condition, as we be in kind; and so is his blessed will: for he saith thus, "Pray intirely, inwardly, though thee think it savour thee not, yet it is profitable enough, though thou feel it nought: pray intirely, inwardly, though thou feel nought, though thou see nought; yea, though thou think thou might not; for in dryness and barrenness, in sickness, and in feebleness, then is thy prayer full pleasant to mee, though thou think it savor thee not but litle; and so is all thy living prayer in my sight."

For the meed and the endless thank that he will give us, therefore he is covetuous to have us praying continually in his sight. God accepteth the good will and the travel of his servants, howsoever we feel: wherefore it pleaseth him that we work in prayer and in good living, by his help and his grace, reasonably with discretion, keeping our mights[51] to him; till when he have him that we seek in fulhead of joy—that is, Jesu. And that

[51] Faculties. powers.

shewed he . . . where he saith, "Thou shalt have me to thy meed." Also to prayer longeth[51a] thanking: thanking is a true inward knowing, with great reverence and lovely dreed,[52] turning our self with all our mights into the working that our Lord stirred us to, enjoying and thanking inwardly: and sometime for plentuousness it breaketh out with voyce, and saith, " Good Lord, grant mercy; blessed mote thou be." And sometime when the earth is dry and feeleth naught, or else by temptation of our enemy, then it is driven by reason and by grace to cry upon our Lord with voyce, rehearsing his blessed passion and his great goodness. And so the vertue of our Lords word turneth into the soul, and quickeneth the heart, and entreth by his grace into true working, and maketh it to pray full blessedfully. And truly to enjoy in our Lord, is a full lovely thanking in his sight.

Chapter Forty-Two

Our Lord will that we have true understanding, and namely in three things that longeth to our prayer: the first is, by whom and how that our prayer springeth; by whom, he sheweth when he saith, "I am ground"; and how by his goodness: for he saith, "First

[51a] Belongeth. [52] Grief.

it is my will." For the second, in what manner and how that we should use our prayers; and that is, that our will be turned into the will of our Lord enjoying: and so he meaneth when he saith, "I make thee to will it." For the third, that we know the fruit and end of our prayer; that is, to be oned and like to our Lord in all thing; and to this meaning and for this end was all this lovely lesson shewed: and he will help us, and he shall make it so as he seeth himself; blessed mote he be: for this is our Lords will that our prayer and our trust be both alike large; for if we trust not as mickle as we pray, we do not full worship to our Lord in our prayer. And also we tarry and pain our self; and the cause is as I believe, for we know not truly that our Lord is ground in whom that our prayer springeth. And also that we know not that it is given us by grace of his love; for if we knew this, it would make us to trust to have of our Lords gift all that we desire; for I am sure that no man asketh mercy and grace with true meaning, and if[53] mercy and grace be first given to him. But sometime it cometh to our mind that we have prayed long time, and yet it thinketh us that we have not our asking: but herefore should we not be heavy; for I am sure by our Lords meaning, that either we abide a better

[53] But if=unless.

time, or more grace, or a better gift. He will that we have true knowing in himself that he is being. And in this knowing, he will that our understanding be grounded with all our mights, and all our intents, and all our meanings: and in this ground, he will that we take our steeds [stand], and our dwelling. And by the gracious light of himself, he will that we have understanding of three things that follow. The first is, our noble and excellent making. The second, our precious and dear worthy again-being.[54] The third, all thing that he hath made beneath us, to serve us, and for our love keepeth it. Then meaneth he thus, as if he said, "Behold and see that I have done all this before thy prayer, and now thou art, and prayest me." And thus he meaneth, that it longeth to us to wit that the greatest deeds be done, as Holy Church teacheth. And in the beholding of this, with thanking, we owe to pray for the deed that is now in doing; and that is, that he rule us and guide us to his worship in this life, and bring us to his bliss; and therefore he hath done all. Then meaneth he thus; that we see that he doth it, and we pray therefore; for that one is not enough: for if we pray and see not that he doth it, it maketh us heavy and doubtful, and that is not his worship. And if we see

[54] Future life.

that doth it, and we pray not, we do not our duty: and so it may not be; that is to say, so is it not in his beholding. But to see that he doth it, and to pray forthwithall: so is he worshipped, and we speed. All thing that our Lord hath ordained to doe, it is his will that we pray therefore, either in special or in general. And the joy and the bliss that is to him, and the thank and the worship that we shall have therefore, it passeth the understanding of all creatures in this life, as to my sight. For prayer is a rightwise understanding of that fulhead of joy that is for to come, with true longing, and very trust. Savouring or seeing our bliss, that we be ordained to, kindly maketh us to long. True understanding and love, with sweet meaning in our Saviour, graciously maketh us to trust. And thus have we of kind to long, and of grace to trust: and in these two workings our Lord beholdeth us continually. For it is our duty (and his goodness may no less assigne in us), that longeth to us to doe our diligence thereto: and when we do it, yet shall us think that it is naught: and true it is. But doe we as we may, and meekly ask mercy and grace; and all that us faileth, we shall it find in him. And thus meaneth he, there he saith, "I am the ground of thy beseeching." And thus in those blessedful words, with the shewing, I

saw a full overcoming against all our wickedness, and all our doubtful dreeds.

Chapter Forty-Three

Prayer oneth the soul to God, which is ever like to God in kind and in substance, restored by grace; but it is oft unlike in condition, by sins of mans party. Then is prayer a witness that the soul will as God will, and comforteth the conscience, and ableth man to grace. And thus he teacheth us to pray; and mightily to trust that we shall have it; for he beholdeth us in love, and will make us partner of his good will and deed: and therefore he stirreth us to pray that that liketh him to do: for which prayer and good will that we have of his gift he will reward us and give us endless meed. And this was shewed in this word, "And thou beseekest it." In this word God shewed so great pleasance and so great liking, as he were much beholding to us for each good deed that we do; and yet it is he that doth it: and for that we beseech him mightily to do that thing that him liketh; as if he said, "What might thou please mee more than to beseech mightily, wisely, and wilfully, to do that thing that I will have done." And thus the soul by prayer is accorded with God. But when our courteous Lord of his special grace

sheweth himself to our soul, we have that we desire: and then we see not for the time what we should more pray; but all our intent, with all our mights, is set whole into the beholding of him. And this is an high unperceiveable prayer, as to my sight; for all the cause wherefore we prayer [pray] is to be oned in to the sight and beholding of him, to whom we pray marvellously, enjoying with reverent dreed, and so great sweetness and delight in him, that we can pray right naught but as he stirreth us for the time. And well I wot, the more the soul seeth of God, the more she desireth him by grace; but when we see him not so, then we feel we need and cause to pray, for failing and for unableness of our self, to Jesu. For when a soul is tempted, troubled, and left to herself by her unrest, then it is time to pray, to make her self supple and buxom to God; but she by no manner of prayer maketh God supple to her, for he is ever one like in love.

And thus I saw, that what time we see need wherefore we pray, then our Lord God followeth us, helping our desire; and when we of his special grace plainly behold him, seeing none of other needs, then we follow him. And he draweth us to him by love; for I saw and felt that his marvellous and his fulsome goodness fulfilleth all our mights. And therewith

I saw that his continual working in all manner of things is done so godly, so wisely, and so mightily, that it over-passeth all our imagining, and all that we can mean or think. And then we can do no more but behold him, and enjoy with a high mighty desire to be all oned into him, and entend[55] to his motion, and enjoy in his loving, and delight in his goodness. And thus shall we, with his sweet grace, in our own meek continual prayer, come into him; now in this life, by many privy touchings of sweet ghostly sights and feelings, measured to us as our simplehead[56] may bare it—and this is wrought, and shall be by the grace of the Holy Ghost, so long till we shall die in longing for love—and then shall we all come into our Lord, our self clearly knowing and God fulsomely having: and we endlesly be all hid in God, verily seeing and fulsomely feeling; him ghostly hearing, and him delectably smelling, and him sweetly smelling: and there shall we see God face to face, homely and fulsomely.[57] The creature which is made, shall see, and endlesly behold God which is the Maker; for thus may no man see God and live after; that is to say, in this deadly life: but when he of his special grace will shew him here, he strength-

[55] Attend. [56] Simplicity.
[57] That is, intimately and completely.

eneth the creature above himself, and he measureth the shewing after his own will, and it is profitable for the time.

Chapter Forty-Six

And our kindly[57a] substance is now blessedfully in God, and hath been sithens it was made, and shall be without end. But our passing living that we have here in our sensuality knoweth not what our self is, but in our faith. And when we know and see verily and clearly what our self is, then shall we verily and clearly see and know our Lord God in fulhead of joy. And therefore it behoveth needs to be, that the nearer we be our bliss, the more we shall long; and that both by kind[57b] and by grace. We may have knowing of our self in this life, by continual help and vertue of our high kind;[57b] in which knowing we may encrease and wax by furthering and speeding of mercy and grace. But we may never full know our self into [until] the last point:[58] in which point this passing life and all manner of woe and paine shall have an end. And therefore it longeth properly to us, both by grace and by kind, to

[57a] Natural. [57b] Nature.
[58] That is, till death—the Latin *in extremis*.

long and desire with all our mights to know our self. In which full knowing we shall verily and clearly know our God in fulhead of endless joy. And yet in all this time, fro the beginning to the end, I had two manner of beholdings: the one was endless continuant love; with sureness of keeping, and blissful salvation, for of this was all the shewing. That other, was the common teaching of Holy Church, of which I was before enformed and grounded, and wilfully having in use and understanding. And the beholding of this came [went] not from me; for by the shewing I was not stirred, nor led therefro in no manner point. But I had therein teaching to love it and like it; whereby I might, with the help of our Lord and his grace, increase and rise to more heavenly knowing and higher loving. And thus, in all this beholding, methought it behoved needs to see and to know that we be sinners, and do many evils that we ought to leave, and leave many good deeds undone that we ought to do: wherefore we deserve pain, blame, and wrath. And notwithstanding all this, I saw verily that our Lord was never wrath, ne never shall: for he is God, he is good, he is truth, he is love, and he is peace; and his might, his wisdom, his charity, and his unity [*i.e.*, oneness with the soul, see below] suffereth him not to be

wrath: for I saw truly that it is against the property of his might to be wrath, and against the property of his wisdom, and against the property of his goodness. God is that goodness that may not be wrath, for God is not but Goodness. Our soul is oned to him, unchangeable Goodness: and between God and our soul is neither wrath nor forgiveness in his sight; for our soul is so fulsomely oned to God of his own goodness, that between God and our soul may be right naught. And to this understanding was the soul led by love and drawn by might in every shewing. That it is thus our good Lord shewed, and how it is thus verily of his great goodness, and that he will we desire to wit;[59] that is to say, as it longeth to his creatures to wit it. For all thing that the simple soul understood God will that it be shewed and known. For those things that he will have privy, mightily and wisely himself hideth them for love; for I saw in the same shewing that much privity is hid, which may never be known into the time that God of his goodness hath made us worthy to see it. And therewith I am well apaid, abiding our Lords will in this high marvel. And now I yield me to our mother Holy Church, as a simple child oweth.

[59] Know.

Chapter Forty-Seven

Two points belonging to our soul are debt [due]. One is, that we reverently marvel. That other is, that we meekly suffer every enjoying[60] in God; for he will that we know that we shall in short time see clearly in himself all that we desire. And notwithstanding all this, I beheld and marvelled greatly what is the mercy and forgiveness of God. For by the teaching that I had before, I understood that the mercy of God shall be forgiveness of his wrath, after the time that we have sinned: for methought that to a soul whose meaning and desire is to love, the wrath of God were harder than any other pain. And therefore I took [saw] that the forgiveness of his wrath should be one of the principal points of his mercy. But for ought that I might behold and desire, I could not see this point in all the shewing. But how I saw and understood of the working of mercy I shall say some deal, as God will give me grace. I understood thus; man is changeable in this life, and by simpleness and uncunning falleth into sin: he is unmighty and unwise of himself; and also his will is over-laid. In this time he is in tempest, and in sorrow, and in woe; and the cause is

[60] Rejoicing.

blindness, for he seeth not God; for if he saw God continually, he should have no mischievous feeling, ne no manner stirring nor sorrowing that serveth to sin. Thus saw I and felt in the same time; and methought that the sight and the feeling was high, and plentuous, and gracious, in regard that our common feeling is in this life; but yet methought it was but low and small, in regard of the great desire that the soul hath to see God: for I felt in me five manner of workings, which is these; enjoying, mourning, desire, dreed,[61] and true hope. Enjoying, for God gave me understanding, and knowing that it was himself that I saw; mourning, and that was for failing; desire, that was that I might see him for ever more and more; understanding and knowing, that we shall never have full rest, till we see him clearly and verily in heaven. Dreed[61] was, for it seemed to me in all that time, that sight should fail, and I to be left to myself. True hope was in the endless love that I saw, that I should be kept by his mercy and brought to the bliss. And the joying in his sight, with this true hope of his merciful keeping, made me to have feeling and comfort: so that mourning and dreed[61] were not greatly painful. And yet in all this, I beheld in the shewing of God

[61] Fear, dread, apprehension.

that this manner sight of him may not be continuant in this life; and that, for his own worship and for increase of our endless joy. And therefore we fail oftentimes of the sight of him: and anon we fall into our self, and then find we feeling of right naught but the contrarious that is in our self. And that, of the old root of our first sin, with all that followeth of our own continuance: and in this we be travelled[62] and tempted with feeling of sin and of pain in many diverse manner, ghostly and bodily, as it is known to us in this life.

Chapter Forty-Eight

But our good Lord the Holy Ghost, which is endless life dwelling in our soul, full truly keepeth us, and worketh therein a peace, and bringeth it to ease by grace, and maketh it buxom, and accordeth it to God. And this is the mercy and the way that our good Lord continually leadeth us in, as long as we be in this life, which is changeable: for I saw no wrath but on mans party, and that forgiveth he in us: for wrath is not else but a frowardness and a contrariousness to peace and love. And either it cometh of failing of might, or of failing of wisdom, or of failing of goodness: which failing is not of God, but it is in

[62] Burdened.

our party; for we by sin and wretchedness have in us a wrath and a continuant contrariousness to peace and to love. And that shewed he full oft in his lovely chear of ruth and pity: for the ground of mercy is in love, and the working of mercy is our keeping in love: and this was shewed in such a manner, that I could not perceive of the property of mercy otherwise but as it were all love in love; that is to say, as to my sight, mercy is a sweet gracious working in love, medled[63] with plenteous pitty; for mercy worketh, us keeping; and mercy worketh turning to us all thing to good: mercy for love suffereth us to fail by measure, and in as much as we fail, in so much we fall; and in as much as we fall, in so much we die: for us behooveth needs to die, in as much as we fail sight and feeling of God, that is our life. Our failing is dreadful, our falling is shameful, and our dying is sorrowful. But yet in all this the sweet eye of pity and love departeth never from us, ne the working of mercy ceaseth not: for I beheld the property of mercy, and I beheld the property of grace, which have two manner of working in one love: mercy is a pitiful property, which longeth to mother-hood in tender love: and grace is a worshipful property which longeth to royal lordship in

[63] Mingled.

the same love. Mercy worketh, keeping, suffering, quickening, and healing, and all is of tenderness of love: and grace worketh with mercy, raising, rewarding, endlesly over-passing[64] [all] that our loving and our travel deserveth, spreading abroad, and shewing the high plenteousness, largeness of Gods royal lordship in his marvellous courtesie. And this is of the abundance of love; for grace worketh our dreadful failing into plenteous and endless solace: and grace worketh our shameful falling into high worshipful rising; and grace worketh our sorrowful dying into holy blissful life: for I saw full truly that ever as our contrariousness worketh to us here in earth pain, shame, and sorrow, right so on the contrariwise, grace worketh to us in heaven solace, worship, and bliss; and over-passing[64] so far forth, that when we come up and receive that sweet reward which grace hath wrought to us there, we shall thank and bless our Lord endlesly, enjoying[60] that ever we suffered woe; and that shall be for a property of blessed love that we shall know in God, which we might never have known without woe going before. And when I saw all this, me behooved needs to grant that the mercy of God and the forgiveness slacketh and wasteth our wrath.

[64] Surpassing.

Chapter Forty-Nine

For it was an high marvel to the soul, which was continuantly shewed in all, and with great diligence, beholding that our Lord God aneynst himself may not forgive, for he may not be wrath. It were unpossible. For this was shewed, that our life is all grounded and rooted in love, and without love we may not live. And therefore to the soul, that of his special grace seeth so far forth of the high marvellous goodness of God that we be endlesly oned to him in love, it is the most unpossible that may be, that God should be wrath; for wrath and friendship be two contraries; for he that wasteth and destroyeth our wrath, and maketh us meek and mild, it behooveth us needs to believe, that he be ever in one love, meek, and mild: which is contrary to wrath. For I saw full truly that where our Lord appeareth, peace is taken, and wrath hath no steede:[65] for I saw no manner of wrath in God, neither for short time nor for long; for truly as to my sight, if God might be wrath a while, we should neither have life, ne steede, ne being; for as verily as we have our being of the endless might of God, and of the endless wisdom, and of the

[65] Place, existence.

endless goodness, also verily we have our keeping in the endless might of God, in the endless wisdom, and in the endless goodness. For though we feel in us wrath, debate, and strife, yet we be all mercifully beclosed in the mildhead[66] of God, and in his meekhead, in his benignity, and in his buxomness. For I saw full truly that all our endless friendship, our steed, our life, and our being is in God; for that same endless goodness that keepeth us when we sin that we perish not—that same endless goodness continually treateth in us a peace against our wrath and our contrarious falling, and maketh us to see our need with a true dread mightily to seek unto God to have forgiveness, with a gracious desire of our salvation; for we may not be blissfully saved till we be verily in peace and in love, for that is our salvation. And though we be wrath, and the contrariousness that is in us be now in tribulation, disease, and woe, as falling into our blindness and our pronity; yet be we sure and safe by the merciful keeping of God that we perish not; but we be not blissfully safe in having of our endless joy till we be all in peace and in love; that is to say, full pleased with God, and with all his works, and with all his dooms; and loving and pleasable with our selves, and with our even

[66] Mildness.

Christen,[5] and with all that God loveth, as love liketh. And this doth God's goodness in us. Thus saw I that God is our very peace; and he is our sure keeper when we be our self at unpeace; and he continually worketh to bring us into endless peace; and thus when by the working of mercy and grace we be made meek and mild, then we be full safe. Suddenly is the soul oned to God when she is truly peaced in herself; for in him is found no wrath. And thus I saw when we be all in peace and in love, we find no contrariousness in no manner of letting.[27] And that contrariousness which is now in us, our Lord God of his goodness maketh it to us full profitable; for contrariousness is cause of all our tribulation and all our woe: and our Lord Jesu taketh them, and sendeth them up to heaven; and then they are made more sweet and delectable than heart may think or tongue can tell. And when we come thither, we shall find them ready all turned into very fairness and endless worship. Thus is God our stedfast ground, and shall be our full bliss, and make us unchangeable, as he is when we be there.

Chapter Fifty

And in this deadly life mercy and forgiveness is our way, that evermore leadeth us to grace. And by the tempest and the sorrow that we fall in on our party, we be often dead as to mans doome in earth; but in the sight of God the soul that shall be safe was never dead, ne never shall be. But yet here I wondred and marvelled with all the diligence of my soul meaning thus; "Good Lord, I see that thou art the very truth, and I know truly that we sin grievously all day, and be much blameworthy: and I may neither leave the knowing of this sooth, nor I see not the shewing to us no manner of blame. How may this be? for I know by the common teaching of Holy Church, and by mine own feeling, that the blame of our sins continually hangeth upon us fro the first man into the time that we come up into heaven." Then was this my marvel, that I saw our Lord God shewing to us no more blame than if we were as clean and as holy as angels be in heaven. And between these two contraries my reason was greatly travelled[62] by my blindness, and could have no rest for dread that his blessed presence should pass from my sight, and I be left in unknowing how he behold us in

our sin; for either me behooved to see in God that sin were all done away, or else me behooved to see in God how he seeth it; whereby I might truly know how it longeth to mee to see sin, and the manner of our blame. My longing endured, him continually beholding; and yet I could have no patience for great fear and perplexity, thinking if I take it thus, that we be no sinners nor no blame worthy, it seemeth as I should erre and fail of knowing of this sooth. And if it be true that we be sinners and blame worthy, good Lord, how may it then be that I cannot see this truth in thee, which art my God, my Maker, in whom I desire to see all truth? For three points make me hardy[57] to ask it. The first is, for it is so low a thing, for if it were an high, I should be adred. The second is, that it is so common; for if it were special and privy also, I should be adred. The third is, that it needeth me to wit,[59] as me thinketh, if I shall live here, for knowing of good and evil, whereby I may by reason and by grace the more depart them asunder, and love goodness and hate evil, as Holy Church teacheth. I cried inwardly with all my might, seeking unto God for help; meaning thus, "Ah Lord Jesu, King of bliss, how shall I be eased?" Who shall tell me, and teach me that me

[57] Bold.

needeth to wit, if I may not at this time see it in thee?

Chapter Fifty-four

And for the great endless love that God hath to all mankind, he maketh no departing in love between the blessed soul of Christ, and the least soul that shall be saved: for it is full easie to believe and trust that the dwelling of the blessed soul of Christ is full high in the glorious God-head. And truly as I understood in our Lords meaning; where the blessed soul of Christ is, there is the substance of all the souls that shall be saved by Christ. Highly owe we to enjoy that God dwelleth in our soul; and more highly we owe to enjoy, that our soul dwelleth in God. Our soul is made to be Gods dwelling place; and the dwelling of our soul is God, which is unmade. A high understanding it is inwardly to see and to know that God, which is our Maker, dwelleth in our soul. And a higher understanding it is, and more inwardly, to see and to know our soul that is made dwelleth in God in substance: of which substance by God we be that we be. And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but as it were all God. And yet my understanding took that our substance is in

God; that is to say, that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God. For the almighty Truth of the Trinity is our Father: for he made us, and keepeth us in him: and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our mother, in whom we be closed: and the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we be closed, and he in us. We be closed in the Father, and we be closed in the Son, and we be closed in the Holy Ghost. And the Father is beclosed in us; the Son is beclosed in us; and the Holy Ghost is beclosed in us: all Might, all Wisdom, and all Goodness, one God, one Lord. And our faith is a vertue that cometh of our kind substance into our sensual soul by the Holy Ghost. In which vertue all our vertues come into us; for without that, no man may receive vertues; for it is naught else but a right understanding, with true belief and sure trust of our being, that we be in God, and he in us, which we see not. And this vertue with all others that God hath ordained to us coming therein, worketh in us great things; for Christ mercifully is working in us; and we graciously according to him through the gift and the vertue of the Holy Ghost. This working maketh that we be Christs children, and christen in lyving.

Chapter Fifty-five

And thus Christ is our way, us surely leading in his laws. And Christ in his body mightily beareth us up into heaven. For I saw that Christ, us all having in him that shall be saved by him, worshipfully presenteth his Father in heaven with us; which present full thankfully his Father receiveth, and courteously giveth it unto his Son Jesu Christ. Which gift and working is joy to the Father, and bliss to the Son, and liking to the Holy Ghost. And of all thing that to us longeth, it is most liking to our Lord that we enjoy[68] in this joy, which is in the blessed Trinity, of our salvation. And notwithstanding all our feeling, woe or weal, God will we understand and believe, that we be more verily in heaven than in earth. Our faith cometh of the kind love of our soul, and of the clear light of our reason, and of the stedfast mind which we have of God in our first making. And what time our soul is inspired in our body, in which we be made sensual, as soon mercy and grace begin to work; having of us cure and keeping with pity and love. In which working the Holy Ghost formeth in our faith hope, that we shall come again up

[68] Rejoice.

above to our substance into the vertue of Christ, encreased and fulfilled through the Holy Ghost. Thus I understood that the sensuality is grounded in kind, in mercy, and in grace: which ground ableth us to receive gifts that lead us to endless life; for I saw full surely that our substance is in God. And also I saw that in our sensuality God is; for in the same point that our soul is made sensual, in the same point is the city of God ordained to him from without beginning. In which city he cometh, and never shall remove it; for God is never out of the soul, in which he shall dwell blessedly without end. And this was said in the shewing where it saith, "The place that Jesu taketh in our soul, he shall never remove it." And all the gifts that God may give to the creature he hath given to his Son Jesu for us. Which gifts he onning in us hath beclosed in him, into the time that we be waxen and grown, our soul with our body, and our body with our soul. Either of them take help of other till we be brought up into stature, as kind[69] worketh And then in the ground of kind,[69] with working of mercy, the Holy Ghost graciously enspireth into us gifts leading to endless life. And thus was my understanding led of God to see in him, and to wit, to understand, and

[69] Nature.

to know, that our soul is a made Trinity, like to the unmade blessed Trinity, known and loved from without beginning; and in the making oned to the Maker, as it is before said. This sight was full sweet and marvellous to behold, peaceable and restful, sure and delectable. And for the worshipful onning that was thus made of God between the soul and the body, it behooved needs to be, that mankind should be restored fro double death: which restoring might never be into[70] the time that the second Person in the Trinity had taken the lower party of mankind; to whom that highest was oned in the first making. And these two parties were in Christ, the higher and the lower, which is but one soul: the higher party was ever in peace with God in full joy and bliss: the lower party, which is sensuality, suffered for the salvation of mankind.

Chapter Sixty-five

And thus I understood that what man or woman wilfully choseth God in this life for love, he may be sure that he is loved without end, with endless love that worketh in him that grace; for he will we keep this trustily, that we be as sicker[47] in hope of the bliss of

[70] Until.

heaven whiles we are here as we shall be in surety when we are there. And ever the more liking and joy that we take in this sickerness,[72] with reverence and meekness, the better liketh him. For as it was shewed, this reverence that I mean, is a holy, courteous dread of our Lord, to which meekness is knit; and that is, that a creature see the Lord marvellous great, and her self marvellous litle; for these vertues are had endlesly to the loved of God. And it may now be seen and felt in measure by the gracious presence of our Lord, when it is: which presence in all thing is most desired; for it worketh that marvellous sickerness[72] in true faith, and siker hope by greatness of charity in dread that is sweet and delectable. It is Gods will that I see my self as much bound to him in love as if he had done for me all that he hath done. And thus should every soul think in regard of his love; that is to say, the charity of God maketh in us such a unity that, when it is truly seen, no man can part himself from other. And thus ought each soul to think that God hath done for him all that he hath done. And this sheweth he to make us to love him, and liken him, and nothing dread but him; for it is his will we know that all the might of our enemies is

[72] Security, assurance.

locked in our friends hands. And therefore the soul that knoweth this sickerly, he shall not dread but him that she loveth. All other dreads she set them among passions, and bodily sickness, and imaginations. And therefore though we been in so much pain, woe and disease that, us thinketh, we can think right naught but that we are in or that we feel; as soon as we pass it lightly over, and set we it at naught. And why? for God will be known; for if we know him, and love him, and reverently dread him, we shall have patience and be in great rest. And it should been great liking to us all that he doth. And this shewed our Lord in these words: "*What should it then agrieve thee to suffer a while, seeing it is my will and my worship?*"

A Prayer From the Mozarabic Liturgy

Be thou, O Lord, our Protection, who art our Redemption; direct our minds by thy gracious presence, and watch over our paths with guiding love; that, among the snares which lie hidden in this path wherein we walk, we may so pass onward with hearts fixt on thee, that by the track of faith we may come to be where thou wouldst have us. AMEN.

SELECTIONS FROM

A Treatise of Prayer

BY

CATHERINE OF SIENNA

FROM THE TRANSLATION

BY

ALGAR THOROLD

CATHERINE OF SIENNA

Saint of the Roman Catholic Church; born at Sienna, March 25, 1347; died at Rome April 29, 1380. In early life she entered the order of penitents of St. Dominic. She practised rigid asceticism, scourging herself thrice daily, according to the strictest Dominican custom. She was noted for her deeds of mercy to the poor and the sick, and also gained a reputation for visions and prophecy. Many of her letters and writings, especially her "Dialogues," were dictated by her in trances. Despite her death to the world, St. Catherine felt compelled, during the closing years of her life, to take part in the political and ecclesiastical affairs of her country. Her chief writings are 373 letters ("Le Lettere di Santa Caterina da Siena," 4 vols., Florence, 1860). She also wrote twenty-six prayers, various short prophetic oracles, and a dialog between herself and God the Father, dictated in a trance in 1378, under the title "Libro della Divina Dottrina" (English translation by A. Thorold, "Dialogue of the Seraphic Virgin, Catharine of Sienna," London, 1896). Her complete works were first edited by Aldus at Venice in 1500, but the best of the older editions is that of G. Gigli, "L'Opere della Serafica Santa Caterina da Siena" (5 vols., Sienna, 1707-26).

Of the Means Which the Soul Takes to Arrive at Pure and Generous Love

When the soul has passed through the doctrine of Christ crucified, with true love of virtue and hatred of vice, and has arrived at the house of self-knowledge and entered therein, she remains, with her door barred, in watching and constant prayer, separated entirely from the consolations of the world. Why does she thus shut herself in? She does so from fear, knowing her own imperfections, and also from the desire which she has of arriving at pure and generous love. And because she sees and knows well that in no other way can she arrive thereat, she waits with a lively faith for my arrival through increase of grace in her. How is a lively faith to be recognized? By perseverance in virtue, and by the fact that the soul never turns back for anything, whatever it be, nor rises from holy prayer for any reason except (note well) for obedience or charity's sake. For no other reason ought she to leave off prayer, for, during the time ordained for prayer, the devil is wont to arrive in the soul,

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causing much more conflict and trouble than when the soul is not occupied in prayer. This he does in order that holy prayer may become tedious to the soul, tempting her often with these words: "This prayer avails thee nothing, for thou needest attend to nothing except thy vocal prayers." He acts thus in order that, becoming wearied and confused in mind, she may abandon the exercise of prayer, which is a weapon with which the soul can defend herself from every adversary, if grasped with the hand of love, by the arm of free choice in the light of the holy faith.

Here, Touching Something Concerning the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the Complete Doctrine Is Given; and How the Soul Proceeds from Vocal to Mental Prayer, and a Vision Is Related Which This Devout Soul Once Received

Know, dearest daughter, how by humble, continual, and faithful prayer the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue. Wherefore should she persevere and never abandon prayer, either through the illusion of the devil or her own fragility, that is to say, either on account of any thought or

movement coming from her own body or of the words of any creature. The devil often places himself upon the tongues of creatures, causing them to chatter nonsensically, with the purpose of preventing the prayer of the soul. All of this she should pass by, by means of the virtue of perseverance. Oh, how sweet and pleasant to that soul and to me is holy prayer, made in the house of knowledge of self and of me, opening the eye of the intellect to the light of faith and the affections to the abundance of my charity, which was made visible to you through my visible only-begotten Son, who showed it to you with his blood! Which blood inebriates the soul and clothes her with the fire of divine charity, giving her the food of the sacrament (which is placed in the tavern of the mystical body of the Holy Church), that is to say, the food of the body and blood of my Son, wholly God and wholly man, administered to you by the hand of my vicar, who holds the key of the blood. This is that tavern, which I mentioned to thee, standing on the bridge,[1] to provide food and comfort for the travelers and the pilgrims who pass by the way of the

[1] In her "Treatise of Discretion" Catherine represents Christ under the figure of a bridge which mends the breach in the road to heaven, this breach being made by "the disobedience of Adam." On the bridge is a "hostelry" ("tavern"), which keeps and ministers the Bread of Life.

doctrine of my truth, lest they should faint through weakness. This food strengthens little or much, according to the desire of the recipient, whether he receives sacramentally or virtually. He receives sacramentally when he actually communicates with the blessed sacrament. He receives virtually when he communicates, both by desire of communion and by contemplation of the blood of Christ crucified, communicating as it were sacramentally, with the affection of love, which is to be tasted in the blood which, as the soul sees, was shed through love. On seeing this the soul becomes inebriated, and blazes with holy desire and satisfies herself, becoming full of love for me and for her neighbor. Where can this be acquired? In the house of self-knowledge with holy prayer, where imperfections are lost, even as Peter and the disciples, while they remained in watching and prayer, lost their imperfection and acquired perfection. By what means is this acquired? By perseverance seasoned with the most holy faith.

But do not think that the soul receives such ardor and nourishment from prayer if she pray only vocally, as do many souls whose prayers are rather words than love. Such as these give heed to nothing except to completing psalms and saying many paternosters.

And when they have once completed their appointed tale, they do not appear to think of anything further, but seem to place devout attention and love in merely vocal recitation, which the soul is not required to do: for in doing only this she bears but little fruit, which pleases me but little. But if thou askest me whether the soul should abandon vocal prayer, since it does not seem to all that they are called to mental prayer, I should reply "No." The soul should advance by degrees, and I know well that just as the soul is at first imperfect and afterward perfect, so also is it with her prayer. She should nevertheless continue in vocal prayer while she is yet imperfect, so as not to fall into idleness. But she should not say her vocal prayers without joining them to mental prayer; that is to say, while she is reciting she should endeavor to elevate her mind in my love with the consideration of her own defects and of the blood of my only-begotten Son, wherein she finds the breadth of my charity and the remission of her sins. And this she should do so that self-knowledge and the consideration of her own defects should make her recognize my goodness in herself, and continue her exercises with true humility. I do not wish defects to be considered in particular, but in general, so that the mind may not be con-

taminated by the remembrance of particular and hideous sins. But, as I said, I do not wish the soul to consider her sins, either in general or in particular, without also remembering the blood and the broadness of my mercy, for fear that otherwise she should be brought to confusion. And together with confusion would come the devil, who has caused it, under color of contrition and displeasure of sin, and so she would arrive at eternal damnation, not only on account of her confusion, but also through the despair which would come to her because she did not seize the arm of my mercy. This is one of the subtle devices with which the devil deludes my servants; and, in order to escape from his deceit and to be pleasing to me, you must enlarge your hearts and affections in my boundless mercy, with true humility. Thou knowest that the pride of the devil can not resist the humble mind, nor can any confusion of spirit be greater than the broadness of my good mercy, if the soul will only truly hope therein. Wherefore it was, if thou remember rightly, that once, when the devil wished to overthrow thee by confusion, wishing to prove to thee that thy life had been deluded and that thou hadst not followed my will, thou didst that which was thy duty, which my goodness (which is never withheld

from him who will receive it) gave thee strength to do; that is, thou didst rise, humbly trusting in my mercy and saying: "I confess to my Creator that my life has indeed been passed in darkness, but I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified and bathe myself in his blood, and so shall my iniquities be consumed, and with desire will I rejoice in my Creator." Thou rememberest that then the devil fled and, turning round to the opposite side, he endeavored to inflate thee with pride, saying: "Thou art perfect and pleasing to God, and there is no more need for thee to afflict thyself or to lament thy sins." And once more I gave thee the light to see thy true path, namely, humiliation of thyself, and thou didst answer the devil with these words: "Wretch that I am, John the Baptist never sinned and was sanctified in his mother's womb. And I have committed so many sins, and have hardly begun to know them with grief and true contrition, seeing who God is who is offended by me, and who I am who offend him." Then the devil, not being able to resist thy humble hope in my goodness, said to thee: "Cursed that thou art, for I can find no way to take thee. If I put thee down through confusion, thou risest to heaven on the wings of mercy; and if I raise thee on high. thou humblest thyself down to hell;

and when I go into hell thou persecutest me, so that I will return to thee no more, because thou strikest me with the stick of charity." The soul, therefore, should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of my goodness, and then vocal prayer will be of use to the soul who makes it and pleasing to me, and she will arrive, from the vocal imperfect prayer exercised with perseverance, at perfect mental prayer; but if she simply aims at completing her tale and for vocal abandons mental prayer, she will never arrive at it. Sometimes the soul will be so ignorant that, having resolved to say so many prayers vocally, and I visiting her mind sometimes in one way and sometimes in another—in a flash of self-knowledge or of contrition for sin, sometimes in the broadness of my charity, and sometimes by placing before her mind in diverse ways, according to my pleasure and the desire of the soul, the presence of my truth—she (the soul), in order to complete her tale, will abandon my visitation that she feels, as it were, by conscience, rather than abandon that which she had begun. She should not do so, for in so doing she yields to a deception of the devil. The moment she feels her mind disposed by my visitation in the many ways I have told thee, she should abandon vocal prayer; then, my

visitation past, if there be time she can resume the vocal prayers which she had resolved to say, but if she has not time to complete them, she ought not on that account to be troubled or suffer annoyance and confusion of mind—of course provided that it were not the divine office which clerics and religious are bound and obliged to say under penalty of offending me, for they must until death say their office. But if they, at the hour appointed for saying it, should feel their minds drawn and raised by desire, they should so arrange as to say it before or after my visitation, so that the debt of rendering the office be not omitted. But in any other case, vocal prayer should be immediately abandoned for the said cause. Vocal prayer, made in the way that I have told thee, will enable the soul to arrive at perfection, and therefore she should not abandon it, but use it in the way that I have told thee.

And so, with exercise in perseverance, she will taste prayer in truth, and the food of the blood of my only-begotten Son, and therefore I told thee that some communicated virtually with the body and blood of Christ, altho not sacramentally; that is, they communicate in the affection of charity, which they taste by means of holy prayer, little or much according to the affection with which

they pray. They who proceed with little prudence and without method taste little, and they who proceed with much taste much. For the more the soul tried to loosen her affection from herself and fasten it in me with the light of the intellect, the more she knows; and the more she knows, the more she loves, and loving much she tastes much. Thou seest then, that perfect prayer is not attained to through many words, but through affection of desire, the soul raising herself to me with knowledge of herself and of my mercy, seasoned the one with the other. Thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they. Altho vocal or mental prayer can be understood in many and diverse ways—for I have told thee that a holy desire is a continual prayer in this sense, that a good and holy will disposes itself with desire to the occasion actually appointed for prayer in addition to the continual prayer of holy desire; wherefore vocal prayer will be made at the appointed time by the soul who remains firm in a habitual holy will, and will sometimes be continued beyond the appointed time, according as charity commands for the salvation of the neighbor, if the soul see him to be in need, and also her own necessities according to the state in which

I have placed her. Each one, according to his condition, ought to exert himself for the salvation of souls, for this exercise lies at the root of a holy will, and whatever he may contribute, by words or deeds, toward the salvation of his neighbor is virtually a prayer, altho it does not replace a prayer which one should make oneself at the appointed season, as my glorious standard-bearer Paul said in the words, "He who ceases not to work ceases not to pray." It was for this reason that I told thee that prayer was made in many ways; that is, actual prayer may be united with mental prayer if made with the affection of charity, which charity is itself continual prayer. I have now told thee how mental prayer is reached by exercises and perseverance, and by leaving vocal prayer for mental when I visit the soul. I have also spoken to thee of common prayer, that is, of vocal prayer in general, made outside of ordained times and of the prayers of good-will, and how every exercise, whether performed in oneself or in one's neighbor with good-will, is prayer. The enclosed soul should therefore spur herself on with prayer, and when she has arrived at friendly and filial love she does so. Unless the soul keep to this path, she will always remain tepid and imperfect, and will love me and her neighbor

only in proportion to the pleasure which she finds in my service.

Of the Method By Which the Soul Separates Herself from Imperfect Love, and Attains to Perfect Love, Friendly and Filial

Hitherto I have shown thee in many ways how the soul raises herself from imperfection and attains to perfection, which she does after she has attained to friendly and filial love. I tell thee that she arrives at perfect love by means of perseverance, barring herself into the house of self-knowledge, which knowledge of self requires to be seasoned with knowledge of me, lest it bring the soul to confusion; for it would cause the soul to hate her own sensitive pleasure and the delight of her own consolations. But from this hatred, founded in humility, she will draw patience, with which she will become strong against the attacks of the devil, against the persecutions of man, and toward me, when for her good I withdraw delight from her mind. And if her sensuality, through malevolence, should lift its head against reason, the judgment of conscience should rise against it, and, with hatred of it, hold out reason against it, not

Catherine of Sienna

allowing such evil emotions to get by it. Tho sometimes the soul who lives in holy hatred corrects and reproves herself not only for those things that are against reason, but also for things that in reality come from me, which is what my sweet servant Gregory meant when he said that a holy and pure conscience made sin where there was no sin, that is, that through purity of conscience it saw sin where there was no sin.

Now the soul who wishes to rise above imperfection should await my providence in the house of self-knowledge with the light of faith, as did the disciples, who remained in the house in perseverance and in watching and in humble and continual prayer, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. She should remain fasting and watching, the eye of her intellect fastened on the doctrine of my truth, and she will become humble because she will know herself in humble and continual prayer and holy and true desire.

Of the Signs By Which the Soul Knows She Has Arrived at Perfect Love

It now remains to be told thee how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was

given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from the house and fearlessly announced the doctrine of my Word, my only-begotten Son, not fearing pain but rather glorying therein. They did not mind going before the tyrants of the world to announce to them the truth, for the glory and praise of my name. So the soul who has awaited me in self-knowledge, as I have told thee, receives me, on my return to her, with the fire of charity, in which charity, while still remaining in the house with perseverance, she conceives the virtues by affection of love, participating in my power; with which power and virtues she overrules and conquers her own sensitive passions, and through which charity she participates in the wisdom of my Son, in which she sees and knows, with the eye of her intellect, my truth and the deceptions of spiritual self-love, that is, the imperfect love of her own consolations . . . and she knows also the malice and deceit of the devil, which he practises on those souls who are bound by that imperfect love. She therefore arises, with hatred of that imperfection and with love of perfection, and, through this charity which is of the Holy Spirit, she participates in his will, fortifying her own to be willing to suffer pain, and, coming out of the house through

my name, she brings forth the virtues on her neighbor. Not that by coming out to bring forth the virtues I mean that she issues out of the house of self-knowledge, but that in the time of the neighbor's necessity she loses that fear of being deprived of her own consolations, and so issues forth to give birth to those virtues which she has conceived through affection of love. The souls who have thus come forth have reached the fourth state; that is, from the third state, which is a perfect state in which they taste charity and give birth to it on their neighbors, they have arrived at the fourth state, which is one of perfect union with me. The two last-mentioned states are united; that is to say, one can not be without the other, for there can not be love of me without love of the neighbor, nor love of the neighbor without love of me.

How They Who Are Imperfect Desire to Follow the Father Alone, but They Who Are Perfect Desire to Follow the Son. And of a Vision, Which This Holy Soul Had, Concerning Diverse Baptisms, and of Many Other Beautiful and Useful Things

As I have told thee, these latter have issued forth from the house, which is a sign that they have arisen from imperfection and arrived at perfection. Open the eye of thy intellect and see them running by the bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, which was their rule, way, and doctrine. They place none other before the eye of their intellect than Christ crucified, not the Father, as they do who are in imperfect love and do not wish to suffer pain, but only to have the delight which they find in me. But they, as if drunken with love and burning with it, have gathered together and ascended the three steps which I figured to thee as the three powers of the soul, and also the three actual steps, figured to thee as in the body of my only Son, Christ crucified, by which steps the soul, as I told thee, ascended, first climbing to the feet with the feet of the soul's

affection, from thence arriving at the side, where she found the secret of the heart and knew the baptism of water, which has virtue through the blood, and where I dispose the soul to receive grace, uniting and kneading her together in the blood.[2] Where did the soul know of this her dignity in being kneaded and united with the blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in holy baptism in virtue of the blood? In the side, where she knew the fire of divine charity, and so, if thou remember well my truth manifested to thee, when thou askedst, saying: "Sweet and immaculate Lamb, thou wert dead when thy side was opened. Why then didst thou want to be struck and have thy heart divided?" And he replied to thee, telling thee that there was occasion enough for it; but the principal part of what he said I will tell thee. He said: Because my desire toward the human generation was ended, and I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show by finite things, because my love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished thee to see the secret of the heart, showing it to thee open, so that thou mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite

[2] The bridge to heaven (see Note 1, p. 199) is represented as having three steps.

pain. I poured from it blood and water to show thee the baptism of water, which is received in virtue of the blood. I also showed the baptism of love in two ways, first in those who are baptized in their blood shed for me, which has virtue through my blood, even if they have not been able to have holy baptism; and also in those who are baptized in fire, not being able to have holy baptism, but desiring it with the affection of love. There is no baptism of fire without the blood, because the blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of divine charity, because through love was it shed. There is yet another way by which the soul receives the baptism of blood, speaking, as it were, under a figure, and this way the divine charity provided, knowing the infirmity and fragility of man through which he offends, not that he is obliged through his fragility and infirmity to commit sin unless he wish to do so; but falling, as he will, into the guilt of mortal sin, by which he loses the grace which he drew from holy baptism in virtue of the blood, it was necessary to leave a continual baptism of blood. This the divine charity provided in the sacrament of holy confession, the soul receiving the baptism of blood with contrition of heart, confessing, when able, to my ministers, who hold the keys of the blood, sprinkling it in absolu-

tion upon the face of the soul. But, if the soul be unable to confess, contrition of heart is sufficient for this baptism, the hand of my clemency giving you the fruit of this precious blood. But if you are able to confess, I wish you to do so, and if you are able to and do not, you will be deprived of the fruit of the blood. It is true that, in the last extremity, a man, desiring to confess and not being able to, will receive the fruit of this baptism of which I have been speaking. But let no one be so mad as so to arrange his deeds that, in the hope of receiving it, he puts off confessing until the last extremity of death, when he may not be able to do so. In which case it is not at all certain that I shall not say to him in my divine justice: "Thou didst not remember me in the time of thy life when thou couldest, now will I not remember thee in thy death."

Thou seest then that these baptisms, which you should all receive until the last moment, are continual; and tho my works, that is the pains of the cross, were finite, the fruit of them which you receive in baptism through me are infinite This is in virtue of the infinite divine nature, united with the finite human nature, which human nature endures pain in me, the Word, clothed with your humanity. But because the one nature

is steeped in and united with the other, the eternal Deity drew to himself the pain which I suffered with so much fire and love. And therefore can this operation be called infinite, not that my pain, neither the actuality of the body, be infinite, nor the pain of the desire that I had to complete your redemption, because it was terminated and finished on the cross, when the soul was separated from the body; but the fruit which came out of the pain and desire for your salvation is infinite, and therefore you receive it infinitely. Had it not been infinite, the whole human generation could not have been restored to grace, neither the past, the present, nor the future. This I manifested in the opening of my side, where is found the secret of the heart, showing that I loved more than I could show with finite pain. I showed to thee that my love was infinite. How? By the baptism of blood united with the fire of my charity, and by the general baptism given to Christians and to whomsoever will receive it, and by the baptism of water, united with the blood and the fire, wherein the soul is steeped. And, in order to show this, it was necessary for the blood to come out of my side. Now I have shown thee (said my truth to thee) what thou askedst of me.

How Worldly People Render Glory and Praise to God, Whether They Will or No

And so perfect is her vision that she sees the glory and praise of my name not so much in the angelic nature as in the human; for whether worldly people will or no, they render glory and praise to my name, not that they do so in the way they should, loving me above everything, but that my mercy shines in them in that, in the abundance of my charity, I give them time, and do not order the earth to open and swallow them up on account of their sins. I even wait for them, and command the earth to give them of her fruits, the sun to give them light and warmth, and the sky to move above them. And in all things created and made for them I use my charity and mercy, withdrawing neither on account of their sins. I even give equally to the sinner and the righteous man, and often more to the sinner than to the righteous man, because the righteous man is able to endure privation, and I take from him the goods of the world that he may the more abundantly enjoy the goods of heaven. So that in worldly men my mercy and charity shine, and they render praise and glory to my

name, even when they persecute my servants; for they prove in them the virtues of patience and charity, causing them to suffer humbly and offer to me their persecutions and injuries, thus turning them into my praise and glory.

So that, whether they will or no, worldly people render to my name praise and glory, even when they intend to do me infamy and wrong.

A Prayer of Christina Rossetti

O Lord, make thy law, I entreat thee, our delight. Plant in our hearts love which is the fulfilling of the law. Teach us to love thee with our whole will and being, and our neighbor as ourselves. Keep us from dividing thy commandments into great and small, according to our own blind estimate; but give us grace humbly to acknowledge that whoso transgresseth in one point is guilty of the whole law. AMEN.

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